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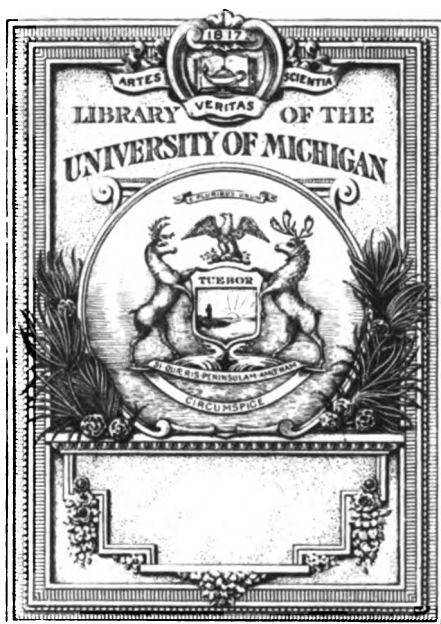
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The Florence of Landor

Lilian Whiting

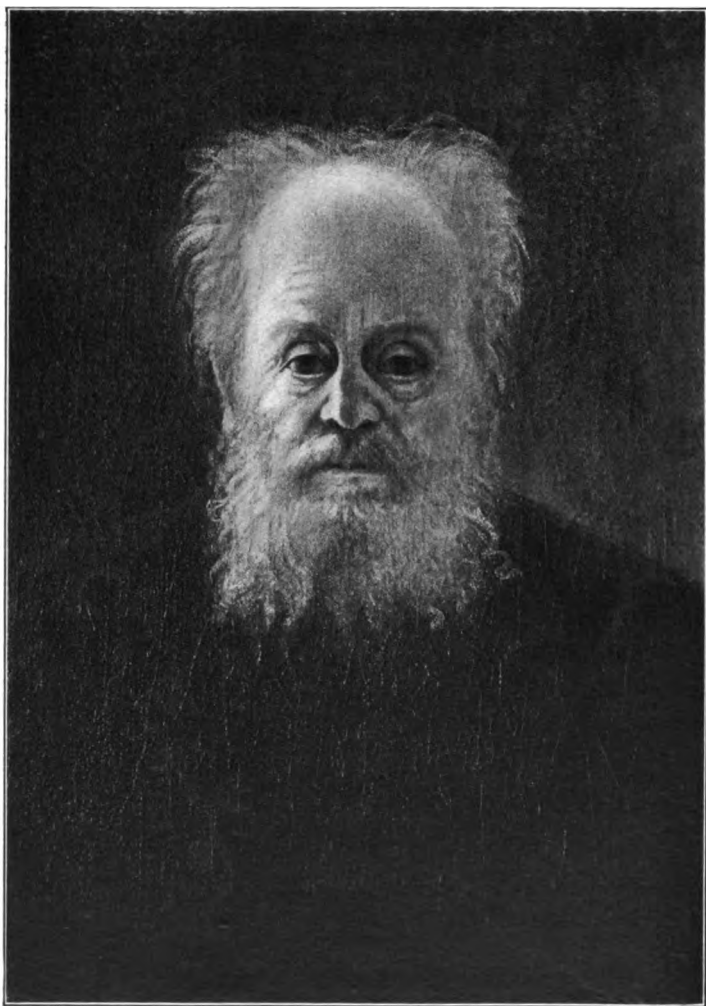


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THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

2000

1924



WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

From the Original Painting by Charles Caryl Coleman. FRONTISPIECE.

1051

THE
FLORENCE OF LONDON.

OF
LILLIAN MONTAGUE.

OR, THE CAUSE OF THE GENTLE WALKER, OR THE
LADY WHO WOULD BE A LADY, OR THE
LADY WHO WOULD BE A LADY, OR THE

THE
THE
THE
THE

With an introduction by the Author.

LONDON
GAY AND GIBB
25 BROAD STREET, S.W.
1897.



WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

Portrait painted by Sir Charles John Jackson, P. R. S. A. 1841.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

BY
LILIAN WHITING

AUTHOR OF "A STUDY OF ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING," "BOSTON
DAYS," "THE WORLD BEAUTIFUL IN BOOKS," "THE LIFE
RADIANT," "THE WORLD BEAUTIFUL," ETC.

"And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
Receive and keep,
Keep safe his dedicated dust,
His sacred sleep."

With Illustrations from Photographs

LONDON
GAY AND BIRD
93 BEDFORD STREET, STRAND
1905

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TO
The Beloved Memory

OF
**ROBERT AND ELIZABETH BARRETT
BROWNING**

**WHOSE FRIENDSHIP ENFOLDED AND SUSTAINED THE
LAST LONELY YEARS OF**

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR

**AND WHOSE GENIUS HAS LEFT ITS IMMORTAL IMPRESS
ON FLORENCE, THE CITY OF THEIR LOVE,
THESE PAGES ARE INSCRIBED BY**

LILIAN WHITING

FLORENCE, ITALY, May-days, 1906

*Each life converges to some centre
Expressed or still :
Exists in every human nature
A goal.*

*Ungained, it may be, by a life's low venture,
But then
Eternity enables the endeavoring
Again.*

Emily Dickinson.

CONTENTS

	Page
I THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR	3
II FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA	41
III THE DEW OF PARNASSUS	103
IV IDYLIC HOURS IN FLORENTINE SAUNTERINGS .	145
V THE DREAM OF ROSE AYLMEYER	201
VI "IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS"	221
VII THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS	259
INDEX	319

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR	<i>Frontispiece</i>	
<i>From the original painting by Charles Caryl Coleman</i>		
Via Tornabuoni	Page	9
An Angel of the Tabernacle. <i>Fra Angelico</i> . .	"	23
Cypress Trees in the Grounds of Villa Landor. .	"	41
Villa Landor, from the Garden	"	52
Santa Croce	"	71
View from Villa Landor over the Fiesole Slopes .	"	83
Dante Alighieri	"	110
<i>From the portrait discovered in the frescoes of Giotto in the Basilica, Florence</i>		
Savonarola	"	180
<i>From the statue by Passi in the Palazzo Vecchio</i>		
Mercury	"	194
<i>From the bronze of Giovanni da Bologna</i>		
Entrance to Grounds of Villa Landor	"	221
View of Fiesole	"	254
View from the Grounds of Villa Landor . . .	"	281
Entrance Hall, Villa Landor	"	290
Monument to Dante Alighieri	"	309
<i>Stefano Ricci. Santa Croce, Florence</i>		

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

*Yon road I enter upon and look around !
I believe you are not all that is here !
I believe that much unseen is also here.*

Walt Whitman's " Song of the Open Road."

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

I

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

"Nothing that is shall perish utterly,
But perish only to revive again
In other forms. . . .
. . . The passion and the pain
Of hearts, that long have ceased to beat, remain
To throb in hearts that are, or are to be."

LONGFELLOW.

FLORENCE, lying fair under the gleaming amethyst lights of the early spring days of 1821, with the old, gray tower of the Cathedral on the heights of Fiesole silhouetted against a brilliant sky, revealed herself like a dream of enchantment to the vision of Walter Savage Landor. For six years he had been living in Italy, sojourning in Como, Milan, Pisa; and on his departure from the City of the Leaning Tower he wrote:—

"I leave with unreverted eye the towers
Of Pisa pining o'er her desert stream.
Pleasure (they say) yet lingers in thy bowers,
Florence, thou patriot's sigh, thou poet's dream!"

Entering Florence did he overtake that psychological moment that, somewhere and some-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

time, lies in wait for every one? Did he then take the first step on that "open road" whose atmosphere is pervaded by the joy of achievement, the fruition of beautiful friendships, which are the only true realities of life? For was not this the open air in which all heroic deeds might be conceived, all great poems written? However unconsciously, Landor was opening the most richly illuminated chapters of his life. Before him stretched away years freighted with profound significance. Down the long vista waited beautiful figures,—the forms of poet, painter, and thinker, as yet undiscerned in the distance; signals flashed to him unrecognized by his vision; subtle vibrations thrilled the air, that had still not aroused his answering perception; all the fascinating possibilities of the Unknown were ready to spring to life and light at the touch of "the electric chain wherewith we're darkly bound." New interests, new sympathies, ready at a touch to materialize into undreamed-of combinations and forces, lay latent out in this undiscovered country of the unpenetrated future.

"The tapestries of Paradise
So notelessly are made!"

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

The tapestries of life, woven out of threads invisible to the eye after designs which have not prefigured themselves, are made as notelessly as are those of the Paradise of which the poet dreams.

Into that wonderful Florence, still vital with the color, the romance, the tragedy; the passionate exaltation and the passionate despair of the fifteenth century, was Landor entering. All this was a part of his unconscious inheritance. Florence thrills to-day with the tumult of the joys and the triumphs, the sorrows and the pathetic failures of her dead centuries, whose inner history is yet to be written. It awaits the seer who is the romancist, or the dramatic poet who can flash the Röntgen ray, the radium light, through these ages of accumulated experience and unveil to the modern eye these mysterious conflicts between the forces of good and the forces of evil that have determined the present quality of Florentine life.

The long, unknown years lay before Landor as the veritable *Salle des Illusions*, like that which was wrought out of fire and magic in the exposition of 1900 in Paris.

There are really few things in life that one may so wisely cherish as his illusions. He may

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

well be as willing to part with his delusions as was Hamlet to part with the society of Polonius; but one's illusions are the annexation of fairyland and of all the infinite possibilities which it rests with himself to transmute into the great realities. One endures, one achieves, by seeing that which is invisible. It is the law and the prophets.

The Salle des Illusions of the Paris Exposition proved itself the most poetic attraction. It appealed to human nature. Its charm lay in its dramatizing the extension into fairyland. Outwardly the mechanism comprised only a small, octagonal salon, fitted up with a few pillars and arches and decorative electric-light designs in the ceiling, the walls lined with mirrors. In an adjoining alcove was an electric keyboard on which an expert electrician played, and, presto! at every touch of his fingers new successions of wonderful effects appeared. Every empanelled mirror became an endless vista reflecting and repeating indefinitely the pillars and arches and the bouquets of light whose colors changed with every breath in an "Arabian Nights" dream of enchantment. In the infinite distance stretched away pillared arch and stately tower, pillars that

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

were all aflame in deep rose-red, with arches of alabaster and pearl; innumerable bouquets of rare flowers floated in the air; the arches were of emerald changing to gold, to turquoise, to silver gray, to amethyst; and down those marvellous pillared halls, which had no existence save in Illusion, troops of dancers whirled and flights of tropical birds surprised the air. The land of faëry, the scenes and the actors that never existed on sea or land, sprang into light and life and motion at the touch of the electrician on the keys. The Realm of Magic opened and beckoned one to enter. Never was there embodied a more vivid symbol of life than was presented in this triumph of French genius, — the *Salle des Illusions*. One could not but read into it the significance that invests the gaze into futurity. As the touch of the electrician on the keyboard called into being all that bewildering phantasmagoria that fascinated the imagination, so a man's own touch on the subtle potencies of personality; on those attractions and repulsions that pervade the social atmosphere and dominate all its relations: his advances and retreats, his faiths and his doubts, — all that constitutes his impress on life, — summon before him those

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

groups and attendant circumstances which he will encounter in his journey on into the unknown future.

“Allons ! after the great Companions, and to belong to them !

They, too, are on the road — they are the swift and majestic men — they are the greatest women.”

For Landor, indeed, the “great Companions” were on their way. What a note of truth was touched by Dickens when he said that the people whom we are to meet, and who are to meet us, are all approaching ; and what they are to do for our lives, and we for theirs, will all be done. There are “the beings born under the same star ;” there are those who are to us as “merely the furniture of the world ;” but the relations in each case are as fixed and as unerring as those of the stars in their courses. “Any one watching keenly the stealthy convergence of human lots,” says George Eliot, “sees a slow preparation of effects from one life on another, which tells like a calculated irony on the indifference or the frozen stare with which we look at our unintro-duced neighbor. Destiny stands by sarcastic with our *dramatis personæ* folded in her hand.”



VIA TORNABUONI.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Destiny stood by as Walter Savage Landor entered Florence that April day and saw the Campanile, "a lily in stone," rising into the Italian sky, and the Veiled Figure, Destiny, held folded in her hand the *dramatis personæ* of that wonderful Anglo-Florentine group who were destined, during the Landor period of 1821-1864, to leave a new impress upon the romantic atmosphere of this Flower of all Cities and City of all Flowers.

The Florence of Landor differed little, in outward aspect, from the Florence of to-day. No annual influx of thirty thousand spring tourists, it is true, then made vocal the Via Tornabuoni with their conversational raptures, expressed almost as invariably in English as are any fragments of conversational interchange one may chance to hear on Fifth Avenue, as the tide of Florentine tourists loiters before window displays of Italian art, or pauses by the grim and massive walls of the ancient Strozzi palace against which a flower vendor piles his masses of roses and lilies and deep-hearted purple pansies. The narrow fourteenth-century streets were lined then, as now, with lofty sculptured palaces. The picturesque Piazza Trinità, which forms the

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

connecting link between the Lung' Arno and the Tornabuoni, is still unchanged, and the tourist of to-day crosses it now, as then, to enter the busy, modern street of Florence, where the rush of life is in strange contrast with the mediæval walls of the Palazzo Strozzi. In front of the Palazzo Buondelmonte is a granite column taken from the Thermes of Anthonin in Rome and given to Cosimo I by Pius IV. It was erected here in 1565, and in 1581 Francesco Ferruci (il Tadda) added the capital to the shaft and the Statue of Justice, which crowns it, sculptured of porphyry. Just opposite this column is a very ancient embattled palace, which was erected in the thirteenth century by the Spini family, who date back to the very founding of Florence, and who were active participants in all its life until late in the seventeenth century, when their name and estates were seized upon by the Tagnalia, from which family they passed to the Pitti. The arms of the Spini were a red shield with designs in gold. At the junction of the Via delle Vigna Nuova and the Via Tornabuoni there stood in Landor's day, as in our own, the old palazzo which Sir Robert Dudley, Duke of Northumberland, bought in 1618 from the

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Rucellai and entirely rebuilt. Sir Robert was the son of Amy Robsart and the Earl of Leicester, as will be remembered, and as the Earl was the favorite of Queen Elizabeth, that sovereign did not allow his marriage to be recognized, and Sir Robert was not allowed to use his title in England. He was a brilliant man, rendering important services to navigation, but, being deprived of his title, he left England and in 1612 sought refuge in Florence, where he enjoyed the confidence and close friendship of Cosimo II, the son of Ferdinando I, and the grandson of the first Cosimo. The marriage of Cosimo II with the Duchessa Eleanora di Toledo was a brilliant event, and on the upper floors of the old Palazzo Vecchio they set up their household gods until, after the Duchessa purchased the Palazzo Pitti, their residence was transferred to that Cyclopean edifice. The rooms which they occupied in the Palazzo Vecchio, with their richly inlaid cabinets, with sofas and chairs in scarlet brocade and tarnished gold, and with their richly decorated ceilings, are still shown to the visitor, who, after loitering away a morning in this haunting-place, seeks the covered passage-way that connects the Uffizi galleries with the Pitti palace and walks through it

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

still in a dream of reminiscence. After the death of the Duchess Eleanora, Cosimo married again, and the celebrated Prince Giovanni, the architect of the Capello di Medici, was the son of this marriage. Prince Giovanni and Francesco I were therefore half brothers, and during Francesco's reign he commissioned Prince Giovanni as Ambassador to Venice to present the thanks of Florence for the acknowledgment of Bianca Capello, and also sent him to Spain on the coronation of Philip III. Francesco married Johana of Austria, a sister of the Emperor Maximilian, but the romance of his life, his love for Bianca Capello, proved to be its tragedy also. The eldest child of Francesco's marriage with Johana of Austria was Marie (born in 1573), who became the Queen of Henri IV of France.

After the death of his wife, Francesco inspired the murder of Pietro Buonaventuri, the husband of Bianca Capello, that he might marry his enchantress, and they lived together for seven years. Their deaths occurred within less than forty-eight hours of one another in their villa at Poggio a Caino, both the victims of poison, given them by Cardinal Ferdinando, to whom the throne then passed. In 1589 he renounced his cardinal's hat

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

and married Christine of Lorraine, and it was his eldest son, Cosimo II, who was the sovereign to receive Sir Robert Dudley and invest him with the title of Duke of Northumberland. The reign of Francesco was characterized by great devotion to poetry and art, and by the enrichment of Florence with many beautiful works. Ferdinando died on February 7, 1608, and to his successor, Cosimo II, is due the perpetual gratitude of all who know and love the Tuscan capital. For he was a noble and generous prince, with great wisdom in statecraft, great interest in the welfare of his people, and the most generous patron of the arts. It was he who called Galileo to Florence. The great astronomer, the seer in the mysteries of the universe, born in Pisa in 1566, was, at the age of twenty-three, invited to a professorship in the university of his native city. He held this chair for twenty-eight years, until, in 1592, his advanced ideas precipitated upon him the usual fate of those who dare see and proclaim truth beyond that generally accepted. Galileo was forced to resign his chair and subjected to criticism as ignominious as it was ignorant.

"The hero is not fed on sweets."

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Personal martyrdom is the price not unfrequently paid for devotion to truth. Yet progress is a law as irresistible as that of gravitation and always is it true that

“ . . . thro' the ages one increasing purpose runs,
And the thoughts of men are widen'd with the process of
the suns.”

Galileo, resigning his chair at Pisa, proceeded to Padua where he taught for twenty years, and where he made many of his most remarkable discoveries. He was called to Florence by Cosimo II. It was here that he published his book explaining the Copernican system, stating the movement of the earth around the sun, which the tribunal of the inquisition in Rome denounced as failing in reverence to the Bible.

Galileo was condemned to the prisons of the inquisition, but the Pope finally commuted his sentence, establishing his residence in the gardens of Santa Trinità al Monte. The original letter written by the inquisitor of Florence to the archbishop informing him of Galileo's condemnation, is still preserved in the Torre del Gallo, the tower from which the great astronomer made his observations. Milton visited him in 1638. As is well known, Galileo died in 1642,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

and his tomb is in Santa Croce. His researches and inventions of the pendulum, of the hydrostatic balance, the thermometer, the compass, and the telescope, together with his discovery of the law by which the velocity of falling bodies is accelerated, impressed the brilliant mind of Cosimo II, who did all in his power to protect the great scholar and diviner of the laws of the universe.

Sir Robert Dudley found in this wise sovereign a friend who appreciated his vast treasures of learning, and Sir Robert, on his part, gladly served Cosimo and the Florentines, whom he grew to love and to regard as his adopted countrymen. Cosimo II married Maria Maddalena, the daughter of the Archduke Carlo of Austria. They had eight children, of whom the second son became Cardinal Leopoldo (born in 1617 and died in 1675), the noted patron of art and the founder of the great galleries of the Uffizi. Cosimo II died in 1620. Sir Robert Dudley lived on in Florence, in this old palace, until 1649, when he died and was entombed in the old church of San Pancrazio in an adjoining street—a church whose origin is so remote that it was considered an old church in

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

the eleventh century. So here at last rest the mortal remains of the son of the ill-starred Amy Robsart, and one reads "Kenilworth" again in Florence with renewed interest because of Sir Robert's life in this city.

The rooms in Sir Robert Dudley's old palace are eloquent of the past. Great mirrors in their carved frames of heavy gilt; sofas and chairs in rich brocade, faded and dim, and massive old tables — all these adorn the spacious salons, in none of which is there the slightest possibility of any heat. There are no fireplaces, and, as there are no chimneys, there cannot, of course, be stoves; and when, in the winter of 1900, the Theosophical Society of Florence held its meetings in these salons, the difference between the essentials of existence required three hundred years ago, and required to-day was keenly perceived. For Sir Robert's furniture of the seventeenth century left much to be desired in the way of ordinary comfort, and even the liberal opportunities of surveying oneself in half a dozen immense mirrors did not compensate for the lack of any heat on a cold day when the keen winds swept down from the snow-crowned Apennines, or for the lack of a comfortable chair on

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

which to sit while listening to Mr. Chaterjii's eloquence. Sir Robert's richly decorated ceilings loomed above the heads of the faithful who gathered in pursuit of Yoga, and Sir Robert's icy cold marble floors were beneath their feet. Could any American with the national appreciation of the ludicrous have looked in, he would have keenly enjoyed the scene. In a vast and icy cold salon, with a marble floor and a lofty, decorated ceiling, its walls hung with red satin against which old Florentine mirrors and a few pictures of saints and madonnas gleamed, he would have discerned a little group of shivering men and women, their feet perched on very modern footstools and incased in fur overshoes while they drew their wrappings as closely as possible, and gazed upon the mobile, brilliant, responsive countenance of Mr. Chaterjii, on whose words they hung with breathless attention.

The coat of arms of the Rucellai are still to be seen on the palace, — a silver lion on a red ground with waves of gold running over it.

The story of the strange lives that have been lived in these old palaces, in the centuries gone from all save memory could be dramatized with little aid from the playwright's art. It is a story

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

in perpetual sequence of the most impassioned human life that imagination can picture ; and to one who begins to turn backward the chapters of supreme emotions — of love and ambition ; of the revenge of man, and the retribution of fate ; of woman's infinite devotion and tenderness of love, and man's fierce, conquering, and daring deeds ; of midnight assassinations ; of lofty purposes and generous fostering of the arts, of learning, of statesmanship, and of the personal tyranny and the torture of persecution in the name of the church ; the record in which every aspiration, every ambition, every passion known to humanity has arisen and spent itself in utmost intensity of appeal — a history is read before which all the romance of all the world beside grows pale. Who can tread the streets of the Florence of to-day and not feel the throb and the thrill of all these past centuries when the men and women whose tombs and monuments and palaces the tourist visits were abroad in these same streets and made the life of their day ? In fact, one becomes so enthralled in the magnetic spell of this impassioned past that he is half oblivious to the panorama of the hour. Other cities have wonderful histories, but only

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Florence has her pages written in her streets. From the musical bells of Santa Maria Novella, awakening one at the heroic hour of five every morning, to the last serenade under the windows of some old palace at midnight, song and music are vibrating in the air. One sits down to write, but his thoughts are dancing to rhythmic melodies. The very atmosphere is entrancing, and he cannot hold himself to his task. All Florence beckons him out for saunterings. He climbs those wonderful terraced hillsides, where one winds upward, seeing on either hand a wealth of roses clambering over gray stone walls, while far below is discerned the Duomo swimming in a sea of blue and silver haze. Gazing upward, one sees old historic villas on the ascending curves, and ancient Fiesole crowns the height overlooking all Florence. Far away, in shadowy outline, are the deep forests covering the hillsides of Vallombrosa. "Every street and terrace and piazza is peopled with the past; and although this past is closely around one, yet is the present not less beautiful. The throngs that pass are the same in likeness as those that brushed against Dante or Savonarola; the populace is the same bold, eager people, with eyes full of

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

dreams and lips braced close for war, which welcomed Vinci and Cimabue, and fought from Monte-Aperto to Solferino. And as you go through the streets you will surely see at every step some graciousness of the ancient time or some poetry of the present hour," writes a lover of Florence.

No one, however, can live for any length of time in this fairest land on earth, where the opalescent lights drift over the purple hills and linger on the silver gray of olive groves; where the air is haunted by music and fragrant with the perfume of a thousand flowers; where legends of the learning and the radiant energy of such figures as Cosimo di Medici and Lorenzo il Magnifico still enchant the mind, — no one, indeed, who sees the Italian nature as typically interpreted in Dante's startlingly vivid portrait of the human soul, can fail to deeply realize the potential nature of Italy. The large intelligence, the marvellously impressive and plastic nature of the people, their sensitive susceptibility, their keen, swift sympathies, and their noble enthusiasms all point to a resurrection of all that is most glorious in the dramatic past, conjoined with all that is most sublime and ennobling in twentieth-century

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

ideals. The very atmosphere of Italy is so charged with intellectual and spiritual vitality that the slightest disturbance of this general energy precipitates it into individual achievement. It is the air of mental magnetism. This temperamental demand of the entire nation requires for its development and fulfilment larger and freer conditions than even the most ideal monarchy can offer. The reign of Humbert was one of the most unique and in many ways the most notable in the history of continental politics. His simplicity of life and integrity of purpose were not more marked than his unfailing kindness in every personal form. When a terrible pestilence ravaged Naples a few years ago it was the king who came among them, who ministered to the sick, who helped to bury the dead. Margherita was the warm patron of the arts and the friend of scholar and savant. Their court was distinguished for its refinement, its purity and simplicity, and for its recognition of all that makes for noble progress.

Still, Italy—in the pervading feeling of the general people, signally expressed in a recent session of the Parliament in Rome by the greatest political leaders and statesmen of the hour—

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

demands a larger freedom, a broader field of action for the inventor, the economist, the statesman than even the liberal monarchy by which the country is now controlled can offer. There was no revolution. King Victor Emmanuel II came to a peaceful throne. He justly holds the confidence and respect of the nation. Still the *trovatore della transizione* is stirring in the quickening pulse beats, and a future awaits Italy when as a democracy she shall rise to the full heights of the splendor of the dreams of Mazzini and Cavour; when all her poetic and artistic and profoundly emotional susceptibilities shall be so reinforced by intellectual vigor, and by the magnetism of contemporary progress, that all that is greatest and noblest in the past shall meet and mingle and assimilate itself with all that is noblest and most enduring in the inspiring future.

Unchanged, too, from the days of Landor in Florence is the ancient Palazzo Vecchio, — unchanged since the early sixteenth-century days when the *gonfalonier* Capponi had the monogram of Christ, invested with a glory, carved in a marble decoration above the principal entrance, and, in a last effort to conquer the Medici, the Florentines declared Jesus Christ to be the King



AN ANGEL OF THE TABERNACLE. *Fra Angelico.*

In the Uffizi Gallery, Florence.

702

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

of Florence and had the inscription *Rex Populi Florentini* placed over the great doors, an inscription changed afterward to that of *Rex regum et Dominus dominantium*. The splendid court of Arnolfo, through which one passes to the massive stone staircases ascending to the Sala dei Cinquecento, the Camera di Cosimo I, the Salotto di Clement VII, and other historic rooms, charm the twentieth-century visitor with the same splendid colonnade that delighted the eye of Cosimo il Vecchio. The Cappella de' Priori, with its ceiling by Ghirlandajo and its crucifix over the altar attributed to Ghiambologna, is precisely as it was when Savonarola celebrated here his last communion before his execution on that tragic day of four hundred years ago. The magnificent Duomo of Brunelleschi; Santa Croce, the Westminster Abbey, the Pantheon, of Florence; San Marco with its cloistered cells forever immortalized by the glory of Fra Angelico; the ancient Church of San Lorenzo, — these and other great landmarks of Florence presented to Landor the same aspect as to the tourist of to-day, save that the present façade of the Duomo had not then been placed.

Brilliant and remarkable were the group of

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

people who were to leave their impress on the Florence of Landor during the forty years and more of his life in this city. Leigh Hunt, Lady Blessington, Francis and Julius Hare ; that quaint character, Mr. Kirkup ; the Trollopes, the Brownings, Isa Blagden, Lady Bulwer, Mrs. Anna Jameson, Emerson, Mrs. Somerville, the Hawthornes, John Kenyon, Nathaniel Parker Willis, Mrs. Stowe, Margaret Fuller (Countess d' Ossoli), Frances Power Cobbe, Theodore Parker, Linda White (now Mme. Pasquale Villari), Kate Field, Sir Frederic Leighton, the Thackerays, Frederic Tennyson, Hiram Powers, George Eliot and Mr. Lewes, Mr. and Mrs. William Wetmore Story, Swinburne, and others came and went—or came and stayed, during these years of Landor's life in Florence.

It was in 1815 that he left Tours in France (where he had passed a year after his departure from England) for Milan ; later he had sojourned in Como, Pisa, and Pistoia, and he had been in Florence more than twenty years when (in 1843) Thomas Adolphus Trollope came, the Trollopes being for some time the guests of Lady Bulwer Lytton in the Palazzo Passerini, and later taking up their abode in the old Palazzo

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Berti, in the ominously named *Via dei Malcontenti*. It was a few years afterwards that the Brownings set up their household gods in Casa Guidi, so that Landor remains fairly the pioneer of the Anglo-Florentines whose fame has enriched the Tuscan capital with even added glory and exquisite appreciation. Landor's first home in Florence was in the Palazzo Medici, but in 1829 he found himself the possessor of the Villa Gherardesca, on the Fiesolean heights, a villa invested with an atmosphere of poetry and romance from being in the scenes of Boccaccio, and also closely associated with the haunts of Lorenzo il Magnifico and Machiavelli. It is on a terraced plateau halfway up the height crowned by the ancient city of Fiesole, and is near the little hamlet of San Domenico. Leigh Hunt, writing of this beautiful region, says:—

“I stuck to my Boccaccio haunts as to an old home. My almost daily walk was to Fiesole, through a path skirted with wild myrtle and cyclamen, and I stopped at the cloister of the Doccia and sat on the pretty, melancholy platform behind it, reading or looking through the pines down to Florence.”

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Near the Villa Landor is an old palace with wide marble terraces and mysterious gardens dark with cypress trees, which was the home of Cosimo il Vecchio and later of Lorenzo il Magnifico, who died in this villa. It dates back to 1658, and during the residence of Lorenzo il Magnifico it was the favorite meeting-place of the Platonic Academy of Florence. Fiesole, on the summit, is invested with traditions of Milton and Galileo; and of this ancient city, whose name as Fæsulæ is even mentioned by Sallust and Polybius, Hallam wrote:—

“In a villa overhanging the towers of Florence on the slope of that lofty hill crowned by the mother city, the ancient Fiesole; in gardens which Tully might have envied, with Ficino, Landino, and Politian at his side, Lorenzo delighted his hours of leisure with the beautiful visions of Platonic philosophy, for which the summer stillness of an Italian sky appears the most congenial accompaniment.”

It was to his life in his new home, the villa so embowered in historic associations, that Landor refers in the lines:—

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

"From France to Italy my steps I bent,
And pitcht at Arno's side my household tent.
Six years the Medicæan palace held
My wandering Lares; then they went afield,
Where the hewn rocks of Fiesole impend
O'er Doccia's dell, and fig and olive blend.
There the twin streams in Affrico unite,
One dimly seen, the other out of sight,
But ever playing in his smoothened bed
Of polisht stone, and willing to be led
Where clustering vines protect him from the sun,
Never too grave to smile, too tired to run.
Here by the lake, Boccaccio's fair brigade
Beguiled the hours, and tale for tale repaid.
How happy! O, how happy had I been
With friends and children in this quiet scene!
Its quiet was not destined to be mine:
'T was hard to keep, 't was harder to resign."

At the age of forty-six Landor was still in the prime of youthful maturity. His life had lacked settled purpose, however, and his unquestionable genius was almost fatally at the mercy of his erratic temper and incalculable moods. His marriage to a woman whose personal beauty was not accompanied by any corresponding gifts of mind or grace of heart brought to bear upon him a perpetually depressing influence of friction and annoyance rather than any sustaining serenity and sweetness. Landor's grave defects

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

of temperament were his own and in any case would probably have signally marred the full expression of his great genius ; but had his marriage been one to have given him sympathy and comprehension, there can be no question of the vivifying effect it would have exerted over his entire personal and artistic life. At this time Landor's "Gebir" and "Count Julian" had already won him high rank in poetic art, and the damp walls of his lodgings in Pistoia had annoyed him as they might ordinary folk who held no countersign for Arcady. He had already written one series of the unique "Imaginary Conversations," in which the incident of his visit to the Odeschalchi palazzo in Como, and that of the children in a cart in the Campo Santo of Pisa, were depicted, and he had embalmed in a quatrain his fantastic emotion on seeing, at Pistoia, a lock of the hair of Lucrezia Borgia, of which he wrote : —

"Borgia, thou once wert almost too august
And high for adoration ; now thou 'rt dust.
All that remains of thee these plaits unfold,
Calm hair, meandering in pellucid gold."

The friendship between Landor and Southey had already existed for many years at the time

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

that Landor took up his abode in Florence, and their correspondence was fairly a conversational companionship in which literary matters and the events of the day were discussed. "I am reading the stupendous poetry of Wordsworth," wrote Landor to Southey. "In thoughts, feelings, images not one among the ancients equals him, and his language (a rare thing) is English." Toward Byron, Landor held an intense personal animosity; but he considered Byron a great poet, — "the keenest and most imaginative of poets." It was Byron's furious assaults upon Southey that aroused his indignation, and of this Landor said : —

"While Byron wrote or spoke against me alone, I said nothing of him in print or conversation; but the taciturnity of pride gave way immediately to my zeal in defence of my friend. What I write is not written on slate; and no finger, not of Time himself, who dips it in the clouds of years, can efface it. To condemn what is evil and to commend what is good is consistent. To soften an asperity, to speak all the good we can after worse than we wish, is *that*, and more. If I must understand the meaning of consistency

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

as many do, I wish I may be inconsistent with all my enemies. There are many hearts which have risen higher and sunk lower at his tales, and yet have been shocked and sorrowed at his untimely death a great deal less than mine has been. Honor and glory to him for the extensive good he did! peace and forgiveness for the partial evil!"

Kate Field, writing of Landor, remarks that the friendship existing between Southey and Landor must have had much of the heroic element in it, for instances are rare where two writers have so thoroughly esteemed one another. Those who have witnessed the enthusiasm with which Landor spoke of Southey can readily imagine how unpardonable a sin he considered it in Byron to make his friend an object of satire. Landor's strong feelings necessarily caused him to be classed in the *tout ou rien* school. Seeing those whom he liked through the magnifying-glass of perfection, he painted others in less brilliant colors than perhaps they merited. Southey to Landor was the essence of all good things, and there was no subject upon which he dwelt with more unaffected pleasure. "Ah, Southey was

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

the best man that ever lived. There never was a better, my dear, good friends, Francis and Julius Hare excepted. They were true Christians; and it is an honor to me that two such pure men should have been my friends for so many years, up to the hour of death," Landor would say. It was to Julius Hare that Landor dedicated his greatest work in the series of "Imaginary Conversations" — the "Pericles and Aspasia."

Walter Savage Landor was born in Warwickshire, England, on January 30, 1775, and died in Florence, Italy, on September 17, 1864, looking back on more than seventy years of active literary work, for he won his first recognition as a poet when a youth of twenty. He was the son of Dr. Walter and Elizabeth (Savage) Landor, and as a boy was a pupil at Rugby; entering Oxford in his early youth, when, after one year of college life, he was suspended for some infringement of university laws. Instead of accepting an opportunity for reinstatement, he gave himself up to the writing of "Gebir," which fairly mirrors the strong influence that Milton at that time had upon the youthful poet. The appearance of "Gebir" admitted him at once to at least

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

a speaking acquaintance with the Immortals, and the autocratic "Quarterly Review" somewhat enigmatically pronounced it a poem which would do any reader credit to understand. "Gebir" was largely written in Latin at first, for, like Milton, Landor seems to have fairly thought and dreamed in Latin and absorbed into his own creative energy all its reinforced power and dignity. The reward of "Gebir" came to him, not merely in liberal measure of fair fortune and fame, but in a guise far more precious and enduring, — a friendship that entered as a golden strand into all his future, — that of Southey, who wrote of the poem a fine critique calling attention to its "miraculous beauties;" and Shelley (born four years after its first appearance) was absorbed and fascinated by this poem during his undergraduate years at Oxford. Coleridge and De Quincy read "Gebir" with appreciation.

In one of the "Imaginary Conversations," that between Plato and Diogenes, Landor makes one of his characters say: "The great man must have that intellect which puts in motion the intellect of others," and his own is a striking instance of this power of communicating vital suggestion.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

"Quickened are they who touch the prophet's bones ;"

and while Landor was too defective in serenity and exaltation of vision to be accorded rank among humanity's prophets, he was yet capable of the loftiest magnanimity, the most generous nobleness. He was richly dowered with

"the hate of hate, the scorn of scorn, the love of love."

He gave unswerving loyalty to high ideals of liberty ; his nature was one of intense devotion to civic and national progress. Erratic as he was by temperament ; liable to manifestations of irritability that had little reason to exist, yet the "kernel of nobleness," as Margaret Fuller called it, was always present. "Great and even fatal errors (so far as this life is concerned) could not destroy my friendship for one in whom I felt sure of the kernel of nobleness," wrote Margaret in a private letter ; and in Landor's character this germ of nobleness made itself felt throughout his somewhat volcanic career. He was a poet for poets, and the glory of his art in verse was fairly paralleled by the matchless splendor of his prose. Swinburne characterizes his "Count Julian" as "the sublimest poem published in our language between the last masterpiece of Milton and the

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

first masterpiece of Shelley," and reiterates that between the date of "Samson Agonistes" and the "Prometheus Unbound" no work in English poetry can be compared to this lofty tragedy. His genius was of the majestic order. In structural beauty his work is almost flawless. As a critic he was fairly a diviner of the inner motive as well as of the degree of excellence in the performance; as, for instance, when in a private letter he wrote of Wordsworth: "Common minds alone can be ignorant what breadth of philosophy, what energy and intensity of thought, what insight into the heart and what observation of nature are requisite for the production of such poetry."

The early literary experiences of Landor were not without their chapters of stress and storm.

A critic in the "Monthly Review" accused the young poet of borrowing phrases "from our incomparable Milton," to which Landor replied that his critic disgraced himself in thus betraying his own ignorance of Milton, as, had he been familiar with the immortal bard, he could not possibly have made the accusation. "I challenge him to produce any expression borrowed from Milton," wrote Landor; ". . . I devoutly offer up my incense at the shrine of Milton. Woe betide the

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

intruder that would steal its jewels! It requires no miracle to detect the sacrilege. The venerable saints and still more holy personages of Raphael or Michael Angelo might as consistently be placed among the Bacchanals and Satyrs, bestriding the goats and bearing the vases of Pousin, as the resemblance of 'Paradise Lost' could be introduced in 'Gebir.'"

In 1802 Landor first visited Paris, caring, he said, for but two things in France,—to see Paris and to see Bonaparte. His enthusiasm for the leader of the French Revolution, who should galvanize into a new life decaying nations, underwent a sea change which crystallized into his lifelong conviction regarding Bonaparte. Landor recognized that Napoleon had "changed the substance for the shadow of greatness," and his view accorded with that of Wordsworth, who wrote:—

"I grieved for Buonaparté with a vain
And an unthinking grief. . . . What food
Fed his last hopes?"

To Kate Field, Landor, in his last years, spoke of Napoleon as one who "fought without aim, vanquished without glory, and perished without defeat;" and Miss Field wrote: "I looked with

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

wonder upon a person who remembered Napoleon Bonaparte as a slender young man, and listened with delight to a voice from so dim a past."

It was six years after Landor's return to England from his first visit to Paris that he and Southey met personally, and a letter from Southey dated April 9, 1808, thus refers to Landor : —

"At Bristol I met the man of all others I was most desirous to meet, — the only man living of whose praise I was ambitious, or whose censure would have troubled me. . . . I never saw any one more unlike myself in every prominent part of human character, nor any one who so cordially and instinctively agreed with me on so many of the most important subjects."

Later Landor visited Spain, and soon after his return events put him in possession of Llanthony Abbey in Wales, where he lived for some years, and where, in 1811, he met and married Julia Thuillier. Soon after their marriage Southey and his wife visited the Landors at Llanthony, "and he always had a satisfaction," records John Forster in his biography of Landor, "that Robert and Edith Southey were the first who shared his turret."

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Unfortunately, family dissensions arose, and, as we have seen, Landor and his wife left England for France, when, after one year, they went to Milan ; and after their sojourns in that city, Como, Pisa, and Pistoia, they came to Florence, in which enchanted atmosphere the life of the poet was destined to be passed, and where, in the little English cemetery, was laid all that was mortal of him "who sang the charms of Rose."¹

The life of Landor extended over three generations of poets among his own countrymen: the first contemporary group including Scott, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Southey, Lamb, De Quincey, Hazlitt, and Leigh Hunt ; the second, Byron, Keats, and Shelley ; while the third included Tennyson, the Brownings, and Swinburne. Within this extended panorama, however, Landor seems to have had comparatively few close personal affiliations ; and "the Florence of Landor" is, to a good degree, simply that of the period of his residence in it, with some glimpses in the perspective of his time that describe certain phases of the Florence of to-

¹ One of the lyrics of Landor begins with the lines: —

"The grave is open — soon to close
On him who sang the charms of Rose."

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

day ; rather than that of a city of which he was in any sense a personal centre. Lady Blessington, who visited Florence four years after Landor had there established himself, conceived for him a warm friendship, and in her home he met Rachel, who, at that time, had not achieved her great fame. "Mlle. Rachel took tea with Lady Blessington," said Landor to a friend afterward, "and was accompanied by a female attendant, her mother I think. Rachel had very little to say, and left early, as she had an engagement at the theatre. There was nothing particularly noticeable in her appearance, but she was very ladylike. I never met her again."

The beautiful Florentine life lay before him. Well might Landor have felt, with Whitman :—

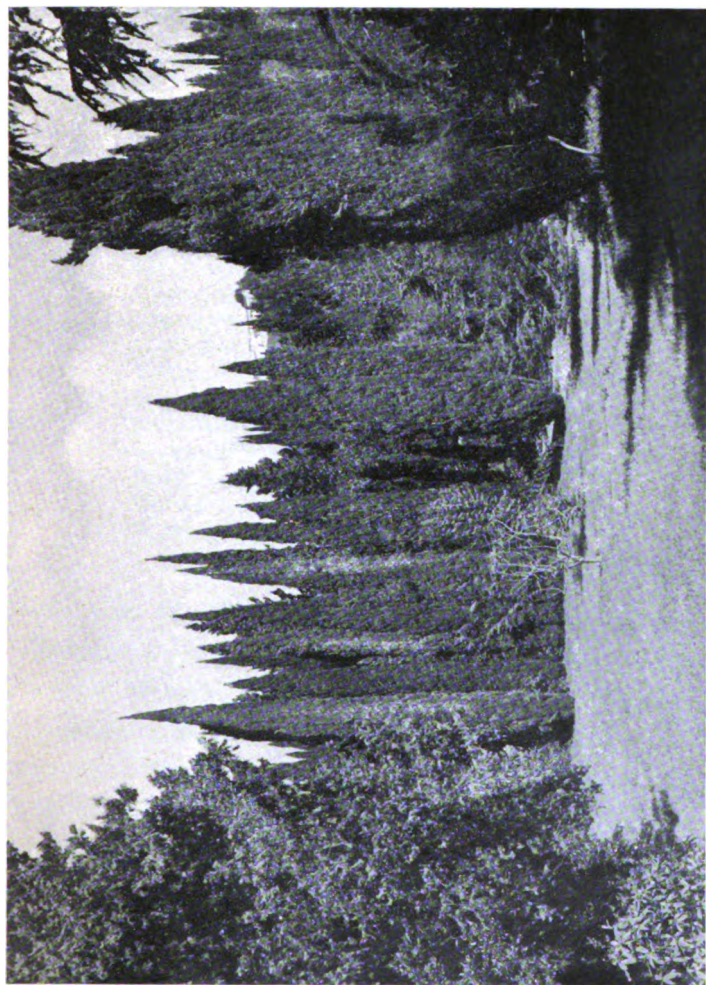
"Be not discouraged — keep on, there are divine things well enveloped ;

I swear to you there are divine things more beautiful than words can tell."

From the *Salle des Illusions* of the future fascinating forms half revealed themselves, vanishing again only to reappear in the advancing years in unforeseen groups and undiscerned combinations, to lend a new charm to enchanting Florence.

*"Of all the fairest cities of the earth
None is so fair as Florence.
. . . Search within,
Without ; all is enchantment ! 'T is the past
Contending with the present ; and in turn
Each has the mastery."*

*"To see nothing anywhere but what you may reach it and pass it,
To look up or down no road but it stretches and waits for you —
however long, but it stretches and waits for you ;
To see no being, not God's, nor any, but you also go hither,
To see no possession but you may possess it — enjoying all
without labor or purchase — abstracting the feast, yet not
abstracting one particle of it ;
To know the universe itself as a road — as many roads — as
roads for troubling souls."*



CYPRESS TREES IN THE GROUNDS OF VILLA LANDOR.

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1794

II

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

But what need I of pictures on my walls?
Out of my window every day I see
Pictures that God hath painted, better far
Than Raffaele or Rassi ; these great slopes
Covered with golden grain and waving vines
And rows of olives ; and then far away
Dim purple mountains where cloud-shadows drift
Darkening across them ; and beyond, the sky,
Where morning dawns and twilight lingering dies.
And then, again, above my humble roof
The vast night is as deep with all its stars
As o'er the proudest palace of the king.

WILLIAM WETMORE STORY.

ON one of the picturesque hillsides between Florence and Fiesole is the Villa Landor which is said to have been built by Michael Angelo. The lawn before the villa is a large oval plot, guarded by solemn rows of stately, motionless cypress trees that stand like a double row of sentinels, spectral and sombre. A great gate with high, stone pillars opens into the grounds. From the west and the south side of the villa there are enchanting views of the Val d'Arno, with gem-like glimpses of Florence gleaming in

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

the heart of the valley. The location is one of the choicest in the environs of Florence. The sunset panorama over the Arno, with the heights of Bellosguardo and San Miniato in the distance; the purple mountains, changing through all the hues of rose and violet shades, crowned with the ancient town of Fiesole from which an Etruscan tower looks down; the luminous air, shimmering in a thousand opalescent lights, — contributed to form a poetic atmosphere in which Landor could dwell as in a majestic harmony. Noble thought and lofty vision might well be the daily companions of one thus fittingly enshrined. “Milton and Galileo gave a glory to Fiesole even beyond its starry antiquity,” wrote Leigh Hunt; “nor is there, perhaps, a name eminent in the annals of Florence with which some connection cannot be traced with the ancient town.”

It was in 1881 that Landor, through the generous kindness of an ardent admirer, Mr. Ablett of North Wales, came into possession of the “Villa Gherardesca,” as it was then known. Mr. Ablett had more than once manifested his profound appreciation of the poet, and it was he who gave an order to the sculptor Gibson for

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

a bust of Landor, a copy of which he presented to him. Landor sent it to his sister in England, explaining that it was the gift of his "incomparable friend, Mr. Ablett." The gift of the bust was closely followed by the generous provision made by Mr. Ablett enabling Landor to purchase for his home an estate so delightful as the Villa Gherardesca. Landor accepted this good fortune with great pleasure and gratitude. It gave him a *pied à terre* which combined comfort and convenience with that enchantment of beauty which the poetic nature craves as its environment. Under date of May 2, 1831, Landor thus writes to his sister:—

"The children were all sitting so comfortably round the fire on my birthday, that they spoilt my intention of writing to you that evening. . . . We have had six cold days, with snow upon the Apennines, and a little of it about half a mile from my villa. You will doubtless be curious to hear something of this villa in which I shall pass the remainder of my life.

"Two years ago, in the beginning of the spring, I took a walk towards Fiesole with a gentleman settled in North Wales, Mr. Ablett.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

I showed him a small cottage with about twelve acres of land, which I was about to take. He admired the situation, but preferred another house very near it, with a much greater quantity of ground annexed. I endeavored to persuade him to become my neighbor. He said little at the time, beyond the pleasure he should have in seeing me so pleasantly situated: but he made inquiries about the price of the larger house, and heard that it was not to be let, but that it might be bought for about two thousand pounds. He first desired me to buy it for him: then to keep it for myself: then to repay him the money whenever I was rich enough,—and if I never was, to leave it for my heirs to settle. In fact, he refuses even a farthing of interest. All this was done by a man with whom I had not been more than a few months acquainted. It is true his fortune is very large; but if others equal him in fortune, no human being ever equalled him in generosity.

“I must now give you a description of the place: the front of the house is towards the north, looking at the ancient town of Fiesole, three quarters of a mile off. The hills of Fiesole protect it from the north and northeast

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

winds. The hall is 31 ft. by 22, and 20 high. On the right is a drawing-room 22 by 20; and through it you come to another 26 by 20. All are 20 ft. high. Opposite the door is another leading down to the offices on right and left; and between them to a terrace-walk about a hundred yards long, overlooking Valdarno and Vallombrosa, celebrated by Milton. On the right of the downward staircase is the upward staircase to the bedrooms; and on the left are two other rooms corresponding with the two drawing-rooms. Over the hall, which is vaulted, is another room of equal size, delightfully cool in summer. I have four good bedrooms up stairs, 18 ft. high. One smaller and two servants' bedrooms over these, 10½ ft. high. In the centre of the house is a high turret, a dovecote. The house is 60 ft. high on the terrace side, and 50 on the other; the turret is 18 ft. above the 60. I have two gardens: one with a fountain and fine jet-d'eau. In the two are 165 large lemon-trees and 20 orange-trees, with two conservatories to keep them in winter. The whole could not be built in these days for £10,000.

“I am putting everything into good order by

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

degrees : in fact, I spend in improvements what I used to spend in house-rent : that is, about £75 a year. I have planted 200 cypresses, 600 vines, 400 roses, 200 arbutuses, and 70 bays, besides laurustinas, &c., &c., and 60 fruit trees of the best qualities from France. I have not had a moment's illness since I resided here, nor have the children. My wife runs after colds ; it would be strange if she did not take them ; but she has taken none here ; hers are all from Florence. I have the best water, the best air, and the best oil in the world."

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The Florentine sunshine glorified the days and Landor entered on the happiest and the most productive period of his life. The home was lovely with its wealth of flowers and the pictorial landscape for which every window made a frame. If "the ornaments of a home are," as Emerson says, "the friends who frequent it," the guests of Landor indeed illustrated this ideal. Leigh Hunt came ; Francis and Julius Hare ; Lady Blessington, whose husband, Lord Blessington, had been one of Landor's nearest friends ; John Kenyon, the relative and benefactor of the

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

Brownings; Mr. Greenough, the American sculptor, and Emerson. A few years before, Landor had been the guest of Lord Blessington on his yacht, for a cruise from Leghorn to Naples. While there Landor visited the ruined temples at Paëstum, finding them "magnificent;" but "Grecian architecture does not turn into ruin so grandly as Gothic," he wrote to a friend. Lord Blessington's death in 1829 deprived Landor of one of his most congenial friends, and his pleasant intercourse with Lady Blessington continued during the remainder of her life, a period of some eighteen years after his establishment in his Fiesolean home. It was to the Countess of Blessington that Landor wrote the lines:—

"Since in the terrace-bower we sate
While Arno gleam'd below,
And over sylvan Massa late
Hung Cynthia's slender bow,
Years after years have past away
Less light and gladsome; why
Do those we most implore to stay
Run ever swiftest by!"

In the enjoyment of those early days in Villa Landor, as the house now became known, the poet entered on what was fairly a *vita nuova* in

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

his experience, of which a letter to his sister offers its intimations. "My country now is Italy," he wrote, "where I have a residence for life, and can literally sit under my own vine and fig-tree. I have some thousands of the one and some scores of the other, with myrtles, pomegranates, lemons and mimosas in great variety."

In the spring of 1834 Landor received a visit from Mr. Nathaniel Parker Willis, then in the height of his youthful fame, who took from the poet a letter of introduction to Lady Blessington in London. To Mr. Willis, Landor committed the manuscript of the "Examination of William Shakespeare for Deer-Stealing" to convey to London, where it was published the following autumn.

Lady Blessington's friendship and his own charm of personality insured to Mr. Willis a brilliant social recognition in London. His poems were widely read, and he was himself welcomed into a society of distinguished people in a manner most gratifying to an ardent and enthusiastic young poet, keenly sensitive and deeply appreciative of the honor and of the enjoyable and sympathetic atmosphere which surrounded him.

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

Leigh Hunt had been sojourning for some time in Pisa and in Genoa, and had fled to Florence as a refuge from the sorrows and disappointments that attended him. He became enamoured of Maiano, a little hamlet on one of the Fiesolean hills, where he wandered dreaming of Boccaccio. He was apparently anticipating the sweet counsel of Longfellow in the lines : —

“ If thou art worn and hard beset
With sorrows, that thou would'st forget,
Go to the woods and hills ! No tears
Dim the sweet look that Nature wears.”

Boccaccio had laid the two scenes of his “Decameron” on both sides of Maiano. The two little rivulets, the Affrico and the Mensola, were metamorphosed into the lovers in his “Nimphale Fiesolano ;” and the deep ravine at the foot of the hill was the “Valley of the Ladies.” Near at hand, too, was the Villa Gherardi, where Boccaccio had lived. “Every spot around was an illustrious memory,” wrote Forster. “To the left, the house of Machiavelli ; still farther in that direction, nestling amid the blue hills, the white village of Settignano, where Michael Angelo was born ; on the banks of the neighboring

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Mugnone, the house of Dante ; and in the background, Galileo's villa of Arcetri and the palaces and cathedrals of Florence. In the thick of this noble landscape, forming part of the village of San Domenico di Fiesole, stood the villa which had now become Landor's. The Valley of the Ladies was in his grounds ; the Affrico and the Mensola ran through them ; above was the ivy-clad convent of the Doccia, overhung with cypress ; and from his iron entrance-gate might be seen Valdarno and Vallombrosa."

Charles Armitage Brown, whose special title to literary immortality is in that he was the near friend of Keats, had at this time domiciled himself in the little convent of San Baldassare near Maiano, where Leigh Hunt, forsaking his first location in the Via delle Belle Donne in Florence, had established himself. Armitage Brown became the confidential friend of Landor, and the two, with Leigh Hunt, made up a congenial trio. Together they rambled over the Fiesolean hills, calling into life and light again the vanished forms of Boccaccio's "joyous company." They watched the play of the twin streams, the Affrico and the Mensola, that wound through Landor's grounds. On a neigh-

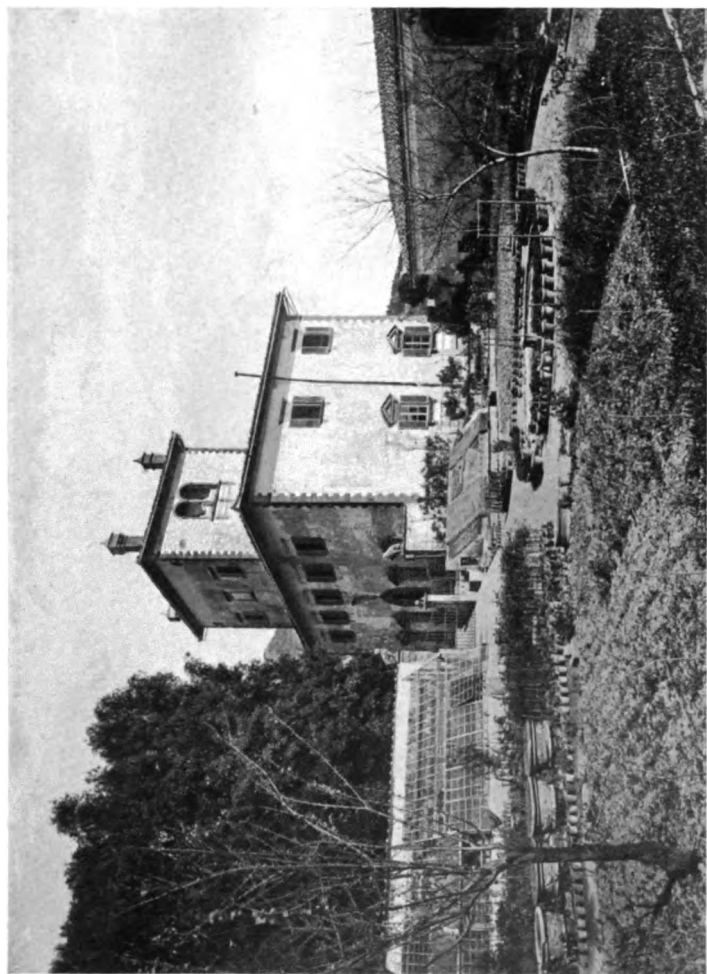
FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

boring hill Machiavelli had at one time lived. Born in Florence, in the Via Guicciardini (in 1469), the son of Bernardo Machiavelli, who married the famous Florentine poet, Bartolommea Nelli, he had, in later years, sought the Fiesolean hills as a refuge in his busy life, where, as Secretary to the Ten, as Ambassador to Rome and to France, he had been in the heart of Florentine activities. From Mr. Brown's windows in San Baldassare could be seen the blue hills of Settignano, where Michael Angelo was born: and across the Mugnone rose the mountains of Pistoia. Florence lay "clear and cathedraled" below, and the convent of San Matteo, in Arcetri, where Galileo often visited his daughter, Maria Celeste, who had taken the vows of a *religieuse*, gleamed within the picturesque landscape. Leigh Hunt and Landor were on terms of most cordial intimacy, and Hunt describes Landor as "living among his paintings and hospitalities in a style of unostentatious elegance." He records his surprise at the limitations of Landor's library, and the incredible extension of his memory, which enabled him to carry a library in his mind. Hunt seems to have been deeply impressed by the scholarship and the original gifts of his host,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

and says: "Speaking of the Latin poets of antiquity, I was struck with an observation of his, that Ovid was the best-natured of them all. Horace's perfection that way he doubted. He said that Ovid had a greater range of pleasurable ideas, and was prepared to do justice to everything that came in his way. Ovid was fond of noticing his rivals in wit and genius, and has recorded the names of a great number of his friends; whereas Horace seems to confine his eulogies to such as were rich or in fashion and well received at court." Hunt regarded Landor as a Latin poet "beyond elegance," and was surprised at the great vigor of his prose. "He is a man of vehement nature and great delicacy of imagination," said Hunt, "like a stormy mountain pine that should produce lilies."

To Landor, Florence continued to grow inexpressibly attractive. "If I can do nothing more for him," he wrote of his infant son, "I will take care that his first words and first thoughts shall arise within sight of Florence." As his first springtime in Villa Landor came on he realized anew the enchantment of Florence in the golden May days. The dazzlingly blue skies gleamed through the transparent air over the rose-flushed



VILLA LANTOR FROM THE GARDEN.

1911

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

amethyst of the hills; the lilies, the most wonderful roses — the glowing damask — the pale yellow of the Cloth of Gold, and the fragrant whiteness of orange blossoms, the resplendence of a myriad of flowers, made every turn and corner rich in color; while every street and piazza were vocal with the song of strolling musicians. The moonlight nights enchanted him with their splendor, and the trio of friends often enjoyed long evening drives on the Lung' Arno, where they watched a thousand lights reflected in the river, and the blaze of brilliant stars above the dome of San Spirito and the heights of San Miniato. These years of Landor's life were rich in their intellectual activities. He was producing the "Imaginary Conversations," although the most brilliant one of them, "Pericles and Aspasia," was not written until 1835. The "Ode to Southey" and also an "Ode to Wordsworth" were written, with much other verse which was largely of a personal nature.

In the May days of 1833 Emerson visited Landor in his rose-embowered villa, receiving from him the most hospitable welcome. At that time Horatio Greenough, the American sculptor, was living in Florence, having gone to

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Italy from his Cambridge (Massachusetts) home in furtherance of his art. It was Mr. Greenough who conveyed to Emerson Landor's invitation to dine with him; and of the visit Emerson wrote in after years: "I found him noble and courteous, living in a cloud of pictures at his Villa Gherardesca, a fine house commanding a beautiful landscape."

Emerson added:—

"I had inferred from his books, or magnified from some anecdotes, an impression of Achillean wrath,—an untamable petulance. I do not know whether the imputation were just or not, but certainly on this May day his courtesy veiled that haughty mind, and he was the most patient and gentle of hosts. He praised the beautiful cyclamen which grows all about Florence; he admired Washington; talked of Wordsworth, Byron, Massinger, Beaumont and Fletcher. To be sure, he is decided in his opinions, likes to surprise, and is well content to impress, if possible, his English whim upon the immutable past. No great man ever had a great son, if Philip and Alexander be not an exception; and Philip he calls the greater man. In art, he loves the

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

Greeks, and in sculpture, them only. He prefers the Venus to everything else, and, after that, the head of Alexander, in the gallery here. He prefers John of Bologna to Michel Angelo; in painting, Raffaele; and shares the growing taste for Perugino and the early masters. The Greek histories he thought the only good; and after them, Voltaire's."

Emerson declared that Landor "pestered" him with Southey, and asks: "But who is Southey?" The Concord sage recorded his recollections of this visit in further detail in regard to breakfasting with Landor:—

"He invited me to breakfast on Friday. On Friday I did not fail to go, and this time with Greenough. He entertained us at once with reciting half a dozen hexameter lines of Julius Cæsar's!—from Donatus, he said. He glorified Lord Chesterfield more than was necessary, and undervalued Burke, and undervalued Socrates; designated as three of the greatest of men, Washington, Phocion, and Timoleon. . . . I had visited Professor Amici, who had shown me his microscopes, magnifying (it was said) two thousand diameters; and I spoke of the uses to

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

which they were applied. Landor despised entomology, yet, in the same breath, said, the 'sublime was in a grain of dust.' I suppose I teased him about recent writers, but he professed never to have heard of Herschel, *not even by name.*"

It was twenty-three years after this visit (in 1856) that Emerson published this reference to Landor in his volume called "English Traits," and it aroused the vehement protest of his host. "Your 'English Traits' have given me great pleasure," wrote Landor to Emerson, "and they would have done so even if I had been treated by you with less favor. The short conversations we held at my Tuscan villa were insufficient for an estimate of my character and opinions. Twenty-three years have not obliterated from my memory the traces of your visit in company with that great man and glorious sculptor who was delegated to erect a statue in your Capital to the tutelary genius of America. . . . I do prefer Giovanni di Bologna to Michael Angelo, who is sublime in conceptions but often incorrect and extravagant. . . . I am sorry to have 'pestered you with Southey;' to have excited the query, 'Who is Southey?' I will reply, Southey is

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

the poet who has written the most imaginative poem of any in our time, — such is the ‘Curse of Kehama.’ Southey is the man who has written the purest prose.”

Landor’s personal affections were so vehement that his friendship for Southey led him greatly to overrate him as an artist. And yet, with this distant perspective of time, it is easy to see how a certain mysterious strain in the poetry of Southey, half revealing itself and then slipping back into the under-world of magic, fascinated the imagination of Landor.

Emerson’s fancy in Florence was chiefly caught by the Duomo, of which he remarked that it was “set down like an archangel’s tent in the midst of the city.”

A few years after this meeting of Emerson and Landor, Charles Sumner visited Florence, and by him Emerson sent to Landor a gift of some books and a letter introducing the great Senator in which he emphasized the great “delight and instruction” which he had derived from the reading of Landor’s “Imaginary Conversations,” one or two instalments of which had then appeared. But Emerson always held of

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Landor the opinion he expressed to Carlyle, that "Landor's speech was below his writing."

The proximity of the villa in which Lorenzo il Magnifico lived and died always fascinated the imagination of Landor, and contributed to the charm of his location.

"Lorenzo was a man of marvellous variety and range of mental power," writes John Addington Symonds. "He possessed one of those rare natures fitted to comprehend all knowledge and to sympathise with the most divine forms of life. . . . An apologist may always plead that Lorenzo was the epitome of his nation's most distinguished qualities, that the versatility of the Renaissance found in him its fullest incarnation. . . . It is nevertheless true that Lorenzo enfeebled and enslaved Florence. . . . He had not the greatness to rise above the spirit of his century or to make himself the Pericles of his Republic. In other words he was adequate, but not superior to Renaissance Italy. This, then, was the man around whom the greatest scholars assembled, at whose table sat Poliziano, Landino, Marsilio Nicino, Leo Battista Alberti, Michael Angelo, Pulci and Giovanni Pico della Mirandola. The mere men-

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

tion of these names suffices to awaken a crowd of memories in the mind of those to whom Italian art and poetry are dear. Lorenzo's villas, where this brilliant circle met for grave discourse or social converse, have been so often sung by poets and celebrated by historians that Careggi, Caffogiola, and Poggio a Cajano are no less familiar to us than the studious shades of Academe."

The magnetism of all this scholarly atmosphere still lingers in the Florentine air. Landor, no less than other poets and men of letters who have loved Florence, must have felt its power, and not the less in that his home was fairly embowered in these regions of the Academe. "In a villa overhanging the towers of Florence on the slope of that lofty hill crowned by the mother city, the ancient Fiesole, in gardens which Tully might have envied, with his chosen friends at his side, Lorenzo delighted his hours of leisure with the beautiful visions of Platonic philosophy, for which the summer stillness of an Italian sky appears the most congenial accompaniment," says Hallam. "As we climb the steep slope of Fiesole," writes John Addington Symonds, "or linger beneath the rose trees that shed their petals from Careggi's

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

garden walls, once more in our imagination the blossoms of that marvellous spring unclosed. While the sun goes down beneath the mountains of Carrara, and the Apennines grow purple-golden, and Florence sleeps beside the silvery Arno, and the large Italian stars come forth above, we remember how those mighty master spirits watched the sphering of new planets in the spiritual skies. Savonarola in his cell below once more sits brooding over the servility of Florence, the corruption of a godless church, Michael Angelo, seated between Ficino and Poliziano, with the voices of the prophets vibrating in his memory, and with the music of Plato sounding in his ears, loses himself in contemplation whereof the after-fruit shall be the Sistine Chapel and the Medicean tombs."

Fiesole is the most charming of features in all this surrounding landscape. Its ancient cathedral dates back to the time of Nero, when its first bishop, San Romolo, a convert and disciple of St. Peter, was sent with a special mission to preach at Fæsulæ, as the city was then known, and here, by the orders of Nero, the bishop was imprisoned and killed with a dagger. In the centre of the town is a little piazza having the old cathe-

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

dral on one side, while opposite is a museum in which are collected Etruscan relics. Not far below the summit of the hill are the walls of a Roman amphitheatre, some twenty or thirty feet high, with flights of steps cut in the solid rock still remaining. There are a few villas on this height occupied by English and American residents, but for the most part the populace are the native Italians of the poorer class. Driving from Fiesole along the crest of the mountains, the view looking down on Florence in its wide valley is enchanting. There is a castle-villa, the Castello di Vincigliata, crowning one height, that is filled with treasures of art. It was purchased in 1855 by Mr. Temple Leader, an English gentleman, who restored it in mediæval style. The castle is rich in artistic objects, among which are an Annunciation by della Robbia; a Last Supper by Santo di Tito; a vast collection of armor, and in the cloisters is an old well and a sarcophagus.

The Platonic Academy came, later, to hold its meetings in the Orti Rucellai, in the old Via del Prato, by the invitation of Bernardo Rucellai, after the death of Lorenzo and the banishment of the Medici. The famous discourse of Machiavelli on Livy was given before this assembly;

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

and the eager audience, in which sat Leo X, listened also to Giovanni Rucellai, who read before it the first Italian tragedy, "Rosamunda." The literary character of the Academy was changed in 1520 to a political one, and a conspiracy was formed against the Medici and Cardinal Giulio; but the Rucellai, being friends of the Medici, opposed this scheme, and their palace and garden were therefore laid in ruins by the people; and the remains, to-day, may be seen in the Castello di Vincigliata. On this drive, too, one comes upon Settignano, where Michael Angelo was born,—Settignano with its headless statue covered with inscriptions.

At San Salvi, a little farther on this beautiful drive on the hills looking down on Florence, is the old convent of San Salvi, in which is treasured, in the refectory, the noted Cenacolo of Andrea del Sarto, to which Mrs. Jameson assigns the third rank in art after those of Leonardo and Raphael.

The old church of San Martino a Mensola, a gray, mediæval structure, is passed, and one recalls a story told that runs:—

"The church was restored by St. Andrew, the companion of St. Ornatus, the Irish missionary

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

bishop of Fiesole. He established a monastery near the church, where he died soon after his master, miraculously comforted on his deathbed by the presence of his sister, Bridget, whom he had left in Ireland forty years before, and in a glorious radiance of light, 'which drew all the people of Fiesole around him, as if summoned by a heavenly trumpet.' After his death Bridget lived in a hermitage at Opacum, now Lebaco, high in the mountains, till her death in 870. The embalmed body of St. Andrew rests beneath the high altar. Formerly the holy water basin rested on a pedestal inscribed 'Help, Help, Ghod'—a relic of the Irish St. Andrew's rule. Some ancient arches and several curious pictures remain in the church, which was restored by the Gherardi in 1450. The church in the Via del Margazzini at Florence was founded by St. Andrew in 786 in connection with St. Martino a Mensola."

Ah! what a dream of enchantment it is to look from the encircling crest of these lofty hills towering above fair Florence, where the Val d'Arno is at moments suffused with an impalpable blue haze, in which the vast Duomo, the picturesque tower of Palazzo Vecchio, the domes of

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

San Lorenzo and San Spirito, and the aerial spires and battlements of Santa Croce seem swimming as in the blue sea. Across the valley rises the height of San Miniato, with its stately, noble cypress trees and old terraces and bridges; numerous massive villas and clusters of villages sparkle amid the terraced, tree-embowered heights surrounding this exquisite city; the glass of the windows in loggias and roofs glitters like a million diamonds studding the landscape.

The Torre del Gallo — Galileo's tower — is one of the objects pointed out on these hills, and it will be remembered that Milton alluded to it in the lines: —

“The moon, whose orb
Through optic glass the Tuscan artist views
At evening from the top of Fiesole,
Or in Valdarno, to descry new lands,
Rivers, or mountains in her spotty globe.”

In “Pascarel,” we find this most perfect and poetic description: —

“He took me up the Star Tower of Galileo among the winding paths of the hills, with the gray walls overtopped by white fruit blossoms, and ever and again, at some break in their ram-

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

parts of stone, the gleam of the yellow Arno water, or the glisten of the marbles of the city shining on us far beneath, through the silvery veil of the olive leaves. It was just in that loveliest moment when winter melts into spring. Everywhere under the vines the young corn was springing in that tender vivid greenness that is never seen twice in a year. The sods between the furrows were scarlet with the bright flame of wild tulips, with here and there a fleck of gold where a knot of daffodils nodded. The roots of the olives were blue with nestling pimpernels and hyacinths, and along the old gray walls the long, soft, thick leaf of the arums grew, shading their yet unborn lilies. The air was full of a dreamy fragrance; the bullocks went on their slow way with flowers in their leathern frontlets; the contadini had flowers stuck behind their ears or in their waistbands; women sat by the wayside; singing as they plaited their yellow, curling lengths of straw; children frisked and tumbled like young rabbits under the budding maples; the plum trees strewed the green landscape with flashes of white like newly-fallen snow on Alpine grass slopes; again and again among the tender pallor of the olive woods there rose the beautiful

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

flush of a rosy almond tree ; at every step the passerby trod ankle deep in violets.

“About the foot of the Tower of Galileo ivy and vervain, and the Madonna’s herb, and the white hexagons of the stars of Bethlehem grew among the grasses ; pigeons paced to and fro with pretty pride of plumage ; a dog slept on the flags ; the cool, moist, deep-veined creepers climbed about the stones ; there were peach trees in all the beauty of their blossoms, and everywhere about them were close-set olive trees, with the ground between them scarlet with the tulips and the wild rose bushes. From a window a girl leaned out and hung a cage among the ivy leaves, that her bird might sing his vespers to the sun. Who will may see the scene to-day. The world has spoiled most of its places of pilgrimage, but the old Star Tower is not harmed as yet, where it stands among its quiet garden ways and grass-grown slopes, up high among the hills, with sounds of dripping water on its court, and wild wood flowers thrusting their bright heads through its stones. It is as peaceful, as simple, as homely, as closely girt with blossoming boughs and with tulip crimsoned flowers now as then, when, from its roof in the still mid-

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

night of far-off Fiesole Galileo read the secrets of the stars."

Italy, that once imprisoned Galileo in chains, now reverences his name. The world usually stones its prophets and its saviours, but in the end the visions and the truth triumph and lend their exaltation and force to the onward progress of humanity. How sublime is the appreciation of Galileo by Sir John Herschel, who said of the moment of his first discovery :—

"What a moment of exultation for such a mind as his! But as yet it was only the dawn of day that was coming; nor was he destined to live till that day was in its splendor. The great law of gravitation was not yet to be made known; and how little did he think, as he held the instrument in his hand, that we should travel by it as far as we have done; that its revelations would ere long be so glorious!"

The drive from Florence to Fiesole passes near the Villa Palmieri, the home of Matteo Palmieri, whose poem, "La Citta della Vita," inspired Botticelli to paint his "Assumption," which is to be seen in the National gallery in

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Florence. It is this villa which Queen Victoria occupied in her visit to Florence in 1888. The road winds up beautiful terraces, with the silver gray of olive orchards gleaming under the purple cloud-shadows that flit over the hillsides, and the glow of tulips and the faint pink of almond blossoms contrast with the delicate green of the fields.

From the terraced piazza in Fiesole is another of those marvellous views over the Val d'Arno, with Florence and other towns surrounded by white walls gleaming in the sunlight. In Fiesole, as in Rome, excavations are constantly being made, and new relics are coming to light. On the side of the hill toward Florence the scene is one never to be forgotten. Ruskin has vividly depicted it when he says : —

“ Few travellers can forget the peculiar landscape of this district of the Apennine, as they ascend the hill which rises from Florence. They pass continually beneath the walls of villas bright in perfect luxury, and beside cypress hedges, inclosing fair terraced gardens, where the masses of oleander and magnolia, motionless as leaves in a picture, inlay alternately upon the blue sky

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

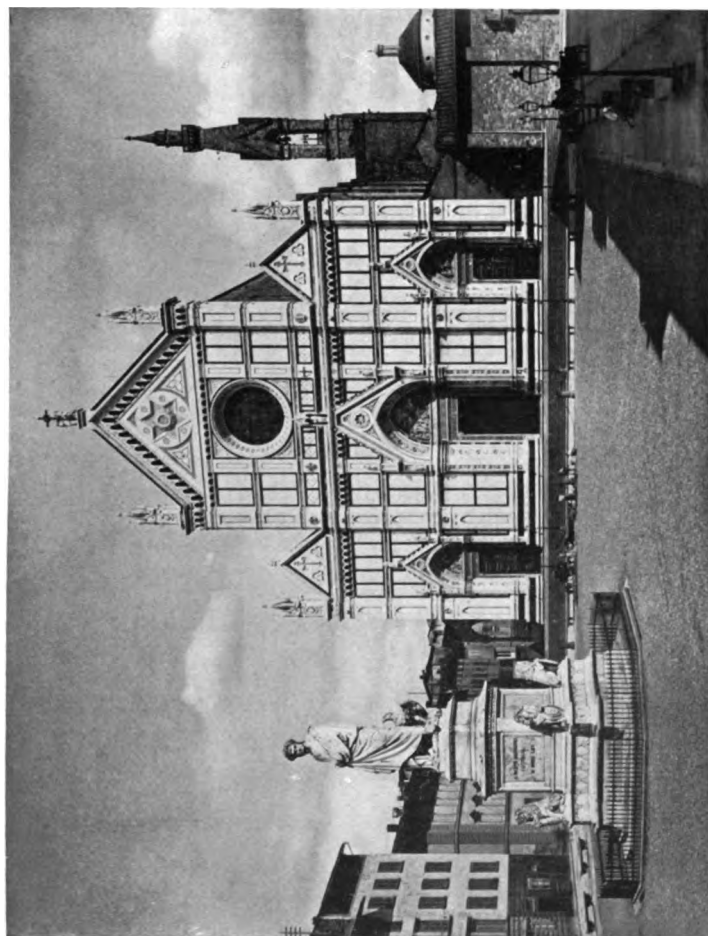
their branching lightness of pale rose color and deep green breadth of shade, studded with balls of budding silver, and showing at intervals through their framework of rich leaf and rubied flower the far-away bends of the Arno beneath its slopes of olive, and the purple peaks of the Carrara mountains, tossing themselves against the western distance, where the streaks of motionless cloud burn above the Pisan sea. The traveller passes the Fiesolan ridge, and all is changed. The country is on a sudden lonely."

It is on these Fiesolan hills that Cimabue found Giotto, as a shepherd lad, drawing on a rock while he watched the sheep. The great painter, "who had already made the streets of Florence ring with joy," took Giotto to his home, where the boy became his most devoted pupil and his not unworthy successor.

Not far above the piazza of Michael Angelo, one of the favorite resorts of the Florentines, is the Church of San Miniato, invested with legend and myth and association, one particularly striking story being that of the founder of the Vallombrosa monastery, who received, as he felt, the evidence of a miracle at this altar. The

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

story runs that a wealthy and distinguished young Florentine noble, Giovanni Gualberto, had an only brother who was murdered, and he vowed vengeance upon the assassin. "It happened that when returning from Florence to the country house of his father, on the evening of Good Friday," relates Mrs. Jameson, "he suddenly came upon his enemy alone and unarmed. Gualberto drew his sword. The miserable wretch fell upon his knees and entreated mercy, adjuring Gualberto, by the memory of Christ who had suffered on that day, to spare his life. Struck with compunction, and remembering that Christ, when on the Cross, had prayed for his murderers, Gualberto stayed his sword, extended his hand, raised the suppliant from the ground, and embraced him." Proceeding on his way, Gualberto entered San Miniato and knelt before the altar, gazing at the crucifix before him. A sudden revulsion of feeling and repentance came over him, and he wept, supplicating pardon and mercy. The figure on the crucifix, in reply, bowed its head, and the miracle sank deep into his heart and changed the entire course of his life. He sought and obtained admission to the Benedictine order, took the vows,



SANTA CROCE.

1911

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

and became a monk in the monastery of San Miniato. Here for years he lived in humble penitence, and at last, on the death of the abbot, he was chosen to succeed him. Pere Gualberto declined, and betook himself to solitude in the shades of Vallombrosa, where he founded that order.

The landscape from this beautiful height of San Miniato has been thus perfectly pictured by Mr. Harford :—

“ The view from San Miniato is best seen towards sunset. From an eminence, studded by noble cypresses, the Arno meets the eye, reflecting in its tranquil bosom a succession of terraces and bridges, edged by imposing streets and palaces, above which are seen the stately cathedral, the Church of Santa Croce, and the picturesque tower of the Palazzo Vecchio, while innumerable other towers, of lesser fame and altitude, crown the distant parts of the city, and the banks of the river, which at length—its sinuous stream bathed in liquid gold—is lost sight of amidst the rich carpet of a vast and luxuriant plain, bounded by lofty Apennines. Directly opposite to the eye rises the classical

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

height of Fiesole, its sides covered with intermingled rocks and woods, from amidst which sparkle innumerable villages and villas."

This panorama lies before the eye when lingering on the piazza of San Miniato. This church, like Santa Croce, is something of a *campo santo*, and it contains a chapel built by Michelozzo for Piero de' Medici. This chapel contains the miraculous crucifix of San Giovanni Gualberto, and there is also in it an exquisite marble screen. "Who that remembers Florence," says Leigh Hunt, "does not remember well the San Miniato alte' Monte, towering on its lofty eminence above the city, and visible along the Lung' Arno from the Ponte alle Grazie to the Ponte alla Carraja?—and the enchanting views of the valley of the Arno as seen from the marble steps of the ancient church—and the old dismantled fortress defended by Michael Angelo against the Medici?—and the long avenue of cypresses and the declivities robed in vineyards and olive grounds between the gate of San Miniato and the lofty heights above?"

The David of Michael Angelo, on the piazza bearing the name of the great artist, is a colos-

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

sal figure of the most free and majestic effect. There are stone benches placed so that the visitor may sit and gaze on the wonderful panorama. In the late afternoon the splendors of an Italian sunset burn in the western sky seen beyond the old Mozzi palace surrounded by groves. Across the valley is seen the purple line of the Carrara mountains and the dark slope of Mt. Morello. The bell towers in Florence catch the lingering rays of the sunset. The graceful spire of the Badia and the rich gleams of color on Giotto's tower irresistibly attract the eye, while from Santa Maria Novella the musical chimes float out on the evening air.

Beyond the Porta Romana, concealed from sight by the curve of the hills, is the Certosa of the Val d'Emo, crowning a hill thickly covered with cypress trees. It is in the Certosa that Niccolò Acciajuolo, Grand Seneschal to Queen Joanna of Naples, and the founder of this convent, is entombed, beneath a recumbent statue clad in armor, above which is a rich Gothic canopy. It was Acciajuolo who, in 1341, founded the Certosa. Farther up the hills the visitor comes upon the wonderful shrine of La Madonna dell' Impruneta.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Across the valley, at the foot of the heights of Bellosguardo, is the Church of San Francesco and San Paola, in which is the tomb of the revered Bishop of Fiesole, one of the most important works of Luca della Robbia. "The admirably truthful figure of the dead bishop, clad in his imperial robes, is placed on a sarcophagus in a square recess, at the back of which are three figures, — Christ, the Madonna, and St. John," says Perkins, writing of the Tuscan sculptors. The faces of these figures are wonderfully impressive in strong individuality and solemn dignity.

At times, while gazing upon the loveliness of the wide and varied landscape from the piazza of Michael Angelo, a silvery fog will envelop the entire valley, seeming to blend earth and sky in an aerial cloud, while a golden gleam of sunshine will suddenly light it up as with an exquisite transparency, and from this delicate, floating, wraith-like mist the summit of a distant hill flashes out, or the dark mass of a group of cypress trees, or the tower of some ancient chiesi, as if they were hung in the air and floating through it like the spectral forms of Paolo and Francesca in Dante's vivid picturing. One might dwell indefinitely on the unearthly loveliness of

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

the environs of Florence with the sudden cloud effects, the ethereal mountain lines, with casine and villa on the heights and the sloping hillsides. Florence is a smokeless city, and the atmospheric phenomena are thus seen in peculiar clearness and beauty. From the Via Lungo il Mugnone is a beautiful view of the Tuscan mountains, a height crowned by a convent—a massive, rambling structure of white stone, gleaming against the far blue sky, which marks the spot where St. Francis met St. Benedict. There is not a street corner, nor a hillside, nor a turn in the way in Italy that is not invested with legend and association running into the historic past, in a way, too, that lives again in the present. Florence was founded and developed by wonderful personalities. For good or for ill, they stamped their impress on all time. This church was built in 1225 by the monks of St. Augustine. The piazza commands one of the most splendid and extensive views—from the Castentino mountains to the ranges of the Carrara. In the church is a Coronation by Piero di Cosimo dating back to the fifteenth century.

On a wayside shrine on the Fiesolan road that winds up to Villa Landor is an inscription

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

that tells all who pass that one Luigi Consago "felt God in his heart" as he walked these hills, and that the fields smiled on him with new meaning. A part of this runs :—

"Su questi colli ore passeggiando giovinetto sentisti Iddio O Luigi Gonzaga piori grazia che in tanto reso della terra sicardi agli nomini il cielo."

The excursion to Vallombrosa — on an eminence nearly three thousand feet above Florence — is one of the interesting things to make. The old monastery there was founded in 1050, and even the present buildings date back to the early years of the seventeenth century.

In 1881 William Wetmore Story passed some time at Vallombrosa with a friend who had taken a deserted villa, — one built by the Medici, centuries ago, and used as a shooting box, — fitted it up as a summer home, and the sculptor thus described the panorama that lay before him :—

"There, far away in the misty distance, can be seen the vague towers and domes of Florence ; and through the valley the Arno and the Sieve wind like silver bands of light through olive-

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

covered slopes that lie silent in the blue, hazy distance, spotted by wandering cloud-shades and taking every hue of changeful light from the pearly gleams of early morning to the golden transmutations of twilight and the deep intensity of moonlit midnight."

Vallombrosa is the very Arcady of the poet's imagination. It has the isolation of a dream-world, a realm in which reminiscence and vision seem to meet; for memories of its consecrated past, prophecies of its alluring future, mingle in the atmosphere. It is an ideal spot for a poet's holiday, with no call of ordinary life and affairs to rudely interrupt his day-dreams. It is little wonder that a nature so essentially ideal as that of Story found here his Elysium; and in the *Villa Lago di Vallombrosa*, the summer home of his daughter, Madame Peruzzi, he and Mrs. Story celebrated their golden wedding and passed there portions of many happy seasons. It was in this villa that Mr. Story wrote his idyllic romance, "Fiammetta," reading it aloud to his wife and daughter (as he notes in the preface to the little tale) "on three beautiful mornings as we sat under the shadows of the whispering

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

piners. To you I dedicate it," he added, "with my truest love and in memory of those happy summer days in the Etrurian shades."

During one of those Vallombrosan summers Tomasso Salvini was their guest, and there were long readings from the dramatic poets, and intimate conversational discussions of art and of the modern drama, as they sat under the murmuring pines, whose tops seem to almost pierce the sky. This, too, was the scene in which it was written that the sculptor should look his last on earth, for in October of 1895, Mr. Story died in the *Villa Lago di Vallombrosa*, and his body was conveyed to Rome and laid beside that of his beloved wife, in the little English cemetery where rests all that was mortal of Keats and of Shelley.

The old church of Vallombrosa has one object of singular interest to the visitor, — a silver reliquary, elaborately carved and chiselled, which is believed to contain the relics of San Giovanni Gualberto. There is also an Assumption, very much defaced by time, attributed to Franceschini. Vallombrosa, in all its beauty and charm of association, is the most unique spot in all Tuscany. Artists and poets seek its inspirations for creative suggestion; the thinker and the seer are

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

attracted to those shades which Milton loved and immortalized in the lines, —

“Thick as autumnal leaves that strow the brooks
In Vallombrosa.”

The Abbey, founded in 1687, was once the most important one in Italy. It was a shrine of the perpetual adoration, and there was hardly an hour when prayer and praise were not ascending from the altar. This Abbey was also the home of learning and the conservator of art and science.

When the Brownings first went to Florence (in 1847) they visited Vallombrosa and implored the monks to allow them to remain for two months, but at the end of five days they were sent away, as Mrs. Browning and her maid — two women — could not be permitted to sojourn in a monastery. “So provoking!” wrote Mrs. Browning. “Such scenery, such fine woods supernaturally silent, with the ground black as ink. . . . But being ignominiously expelled, we had to come back to Florence to find a new apartment cooler than the old, and wait for dear Mr. Kenyon. Then we took up our journey toward Rome with a pause at Arezzo, and a longer one at Perugia, and planned to take an apartment over the Tarpeian rock and enjoy Rome as we

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

have enjoyed Florence. More could not be. This Florence is unspeakably beautiful."

It is more than a study of myth and mediæval legend to live in Florence, and still one can hardly fail to preserve the relations between antiquity and modernity by becoming oblivious to the claims of the latter. When all is said that can be for Italy—and that is a great deal; for its infinite depths of historic interest; its great personages who lived and loved and suffered and sacrificed for its glory, and for what they held to be the glory of the divine truth; for its enthralling romance; its atmosphere of enchantment—when all is said that can be for all its loveliness, it still remains true that one day in our own country is more significant than is a year under these fair skies. For Italy is the land where it is always afternoon. It is the land where time is not of the faintest consequence. The Italians, as a general rule, do nothing, and they so contrive the general mechanism of life that the stranger within the gates can do nothing either. The most disproportionate length of time is required for the smallest thing.

In 1892 a funicular railway up the heights of Vallombrosa was constructed, and this should

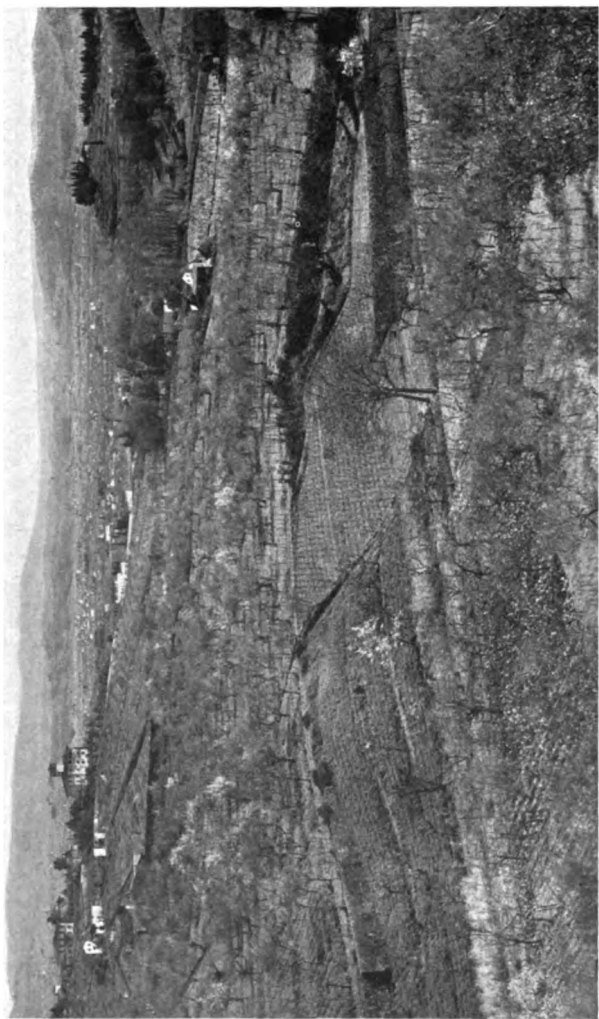
FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

bring the historic height within an easy distance of an hour and a half, at most, from Florence, were transportation conducted as it is in America. The route now is by steam train from Florence to Arezzo, leaving it at Pontassieve, where the funicular railway road ascends the mountain. The journey by the steam train, which requires fifty-five minutes, could be easily made in America within fifteen minutes, as it is hardly more than twelve miles. The cogwheel trip of the height requires almost as much time as it takes in Colorado to ascend Pike's Peak, which is a far greater distance. In our own country the excursion from Florence to Vallombrosa would be made so attractive and so easy that it would be a distinctive source of revenue to the railroad management, and incidentally to every one along the way, from the refreshment stands to the penny newspapers, while, on the side of the tourists, the excursion would be so delightful that they would throng the trains. It is true that the trip up Vallombrosa is no longer the penitential pilgrimage that it was in the days of Landor ; but still the appallingly early matutinal hour at which one must fare forth, and the late hour of return, make the day inevitably more fatiguing than is

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

at all necessary for the little distance. To arrive at the point of exhaustion in a good cause may be counted all joy; but to be fatigued for no reason at all save that of the lack of adequate facilities is another matter. If only some enterprising American would discover Italy, as a certain enterprising Italian discovered America, and proceed to develop it into ways and means of modern life, what a delightful event it would be.

"But you are so luxurious, you Americans," exclaims a long-expatriated American artist; "we don't believe in so much self-indulgence." "But it is not self-indulgence at all," one protests; "it is simply means to an end, and that end is achievement. Why, we are doing things in America! We take thousands and thousands of acres of arid land and we re-create it into blossoming beauty and fertile production. We cross the continent of three thousand miles in four days, living, meantime, in a flying palace, but we do it for a purpose, and that purpose is not mere self-indulgence. We overcome time and space, — those two barriers, — and America is by no means merely the producer of wealth; this wealth is expressing itself in universal education, in great universities, in great opportunities, great art."



A VIEW FROM VILLA LADOR OVER THE FIESOLE SLOPES.

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

Florence—supposed to be a musical centre—cannot now compete with the great music of Boston, New York, Chicago, or even with musical opportunities in smaller Western cities. It cannot compete in modern painting or sculpture with America. Our wonderful architectural development, our marvellous feats of engineering, the greatness of life in general, as exemplified in America, finds no parallel in Italy. And this greatness of achievement requires conditions of comfort and convenience in order that one may be physically equal to the great achievements. If the physical plane of life, the basis of all development, can be easily conquered by inventions and appliances, the energy that would otherwise need to be expended thereon is released and is free to apply itself to higher problems.

George Eliot has recorded her opinion that the view from Fiesole is the most beautiful of any in the vicinity of Florence, but that from San Miniato, she adds “has an interest of another kind because here Florence lies much nearer below and one can distinguish the various buildings more completely. . . . There is Brunelleschi’s mighty dome, and close by, with its lovely colors not entirely absorbed by distance, Giotto’s incom-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

parable Campanile, beautiful as a jewel." Mr. Longfellow's exquisite sonnet to this wonderful "lily of Florence" recurs to memory:—

"How many lives, made beautiful and sweet
By self-devotion and by self-restraint,
Whose pleasure is to run without complaint
On unknown errands of the Paraclete,
Wanting the reverence of unshodden feet,
Fail of the nimbus which the artists paint
Around the shining forehead of the saint,
And are in their completeness incomplete!
In the old Tuscan town stands Giotto's tower,
The lily of Florence blossoming in stone,—
A vision, a delight, and a desire,—
The builder's perfect and centennial flower,
That in the night of ages bloomed alone,
But wanting still the glory of the spire."

George Eliot and Mr. Lewes were the guests of Thomas Adolphus Trollope in the winter of 1869–70, at his villa outside Porta San Niccolo at Ricorboli, where he had a small podere. The great novelist had previously visited Florence in the spring of 1860 and again a year later, her first visit being devoted to her studies for "Romola," which she wrote in London during the ensuing year. The spacious salon in Villa Trollope, on the Piazza Indipendza, where George Eliot copied her notes for "Romola," was later occupied by

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

Mr. Thomas Hardy, during a visit to Florence. In the perspective of time since "Romola" was published it is interesting to read the author's own conception of that work, given in a private letter to Mr. R. H. Hutton, bearing date of August, 1868. "It is the habit of my imagination," she writes, "to strive after as full a vision of the medium in which a character moves as of the character itself. . . . My predominant feeling is — not that I have achieved anything, but — that great, great facts have struggled to find a voice through me, and have been only able to speak brokenly. That consciousness makes me cherish the more any proof that my work has been seen to have some true significance by minds prepared not simply by instruction, but by that religious and moral sympathy with the historical life of man, which is the larger half of culture."

George Eliot passed the entire month of May in 1861 in Florence. "Our morning hours were spent in looking at streets, buildings and pictures," she records in her journal, "in hunting up old books at shops or stalls, or in reading at the Magliabichiana Library." The Laurentian Library (*Libreria Laurenziana*), that wonderful temple of learning designed by Michael Angelo,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

held a great charm for George Eliot, who found it "resembling a chapel with open pews of dark wood. The precious books are all chained to the desk," she notes, "and here we saw old manuscripts of exquisite neatness, culminating in the Virgil of the fourth century, and the Pandects, said to have been recovered from oblivion at Amalfi."

From the cloistered terrace of the old church of San Lorenzo a door leads into the Laurentian Library whose real founder was Cosimo il Vecchio, the most munificent of Florentine patrons of art and letters. Vacchi, the historian, characterizes Cosimo as one "with displayed and manifest virtues, and secret and hidden faults, who made himself head and little less than prince of a Republic which though free, yet served;" and the great benefits he conferred by his dominant power of temperament led to the demand for his recall after his enemies had banished him. As will be remembered, Lorenzo il Magnifico was the grandson of Cosimo il Vecchio and possessed in a striking degree his characteristics. Cosimo's son, Piero, married Mona Lucrezia Tornabuoni, a woman of great learning and a poet of her day. Of this marriage there were three daughters, and

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

two sons, Lorenzo, afterward known as *il Magnifico*, and Giuliano, — the two brothers whose tombs in the Capello Medici, the architectural masterpiece of Michael Angelo, and one of the special points of pilgrimage in Florence. Here are found those immortal figures of Michael Angelo, the symbolic statues of Day and Night, of Twilight and Dawn, whose replicas are familiar in every museum of art. Of these statues Ruskin wrote : “ Four ineffable types, not of Darkness nor of Day, not of Morning nor Evening, but of the Departure and the Resurrection : the Twilight and the Dawn of the souls of men.” The figure of Death is invested with a grandeur that is indescribable and of the Dawn, John Bell has said that “ the form is of the most exquisite proportions ; the head, a grand and heroic cast, and the drapery, which falls in thin transparent folds from the turban, is full of grace, while in her noble countenance a spring of thought, an awakening principle, seems to breathe, as if the rising day awaited the opening of her eyes. Day is much unfinished, little more than blocked out, most magnificent. Night in sleep and silence, is finely imagined, the attitude beautiful, mournful, and full of the most tender expression, the droop-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

ing head, the supporting hand, and the rich head-dress unrivalled in the art."

Of these statues Giovanni Battista Strozzi wrote : —

" La Notte che tu vedi in sì dolci atti
Dormire, fu da un Angelo scolpita
In questo sasso, e perchè dorme, ha vita ;
Destala se nol credi, e parleratti."

To which Michael Angelo replied : —

" Grato m' è il sonno, e più l' esser di sasso
Mentre che il danno e la vergogna dura ;
Non veder, non sentir, m' è gran ventura :
Però non mi destar, deh ! parla basso !"

One translation of these two stanzas thus runs : —

" Night in so sweet an attitude beheld
Asleep, was by an angel sculptured
In this stone ; and, sleeping, is alive ;
Waken her, doubter, she will speak to thee."

Another translation of the Strozzi stanza (made by J. A. Wright) is as follows : —

" Carved by an Angel, in this marble white
Sweetly reposing, lo, the Goddess Night,
Calmly she sleeps, and so must living be ;
Awake her gently ; she will speak to thee."

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

The stanza by Michael Angelo has been thus translated : —

“Welcome is sleep, more welcome sleep of stone
Whilst crime and shame continue in the land ;
My happy fortune, not to see or hear ;
Waken me not — in mercy, whisper low.”

Mr. Wright has also translated this stanza in the following lines : —

“Grateful is sleep, whilst wrong and shame survive ;
More grateful still in senseless stone to live ;
Gladly both sight and hearing I forego,
Oh ! then awake me not ! Hush ! whisper low !”

Hawthorne was deeply impressed by the statue of Lorenzo il Magnifico, which in its entablature looks down forever, in the immortal repose of marble, on the figures of the Twilight and Dawn. Of the statue of Lorenzo, Hawthorne¹ says: “It is the one work worthy of Michael Angelo’s reputation and grand enough to vindicate for him all the genius that the world gave him credit for. And yet it seems a simple thing enough to think of or to execute ; merely a sitting figure, the face partly over-shadowed by a helmet, one hand supporting the chin. . . . No

¹ French and Italian “Note Books.”

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

such grandeur and majesty has elsewhere been put into human shape. It is all a miracle, the deep repose and the deep life within it."

George Eliot did not meet the Brownings during either of her two visits (in 1861-1862), but Mrs. Browning wrote in a letter to Miss Sarianna Browning, under date of June, 1860: "Mr. Lewes and Miss Evans have been here and are coming back. I admire her books so much that certainly I shall not refuse to receive her." As a matter of fact George Eliot only met Mr. Browning for the first time some two years after the death of his wife. During all her sojourns in Florence, George Eliot seems to have lived largely the life of a student. She examined with great interest the collection of ivory work by Benvenuto Cellini in the Palazzo Vecchio, and the beauty of Orcagna's Loggia de' Lanzi grew upon her. The historic atmosphere of this Loggia still fascinates the student of Florentine history, for here were the decrees of the government proclaimed to the people who thronged the Piazza della Signoria when the ringing of the bells in Palazzo Vecchio called them to assemble. Cellini's Perseus impressed George Eliot as fantastic, but the Ajax — an an-

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

tique Greek sculpture, one of the most perfect examples of Greek art — inspired her imagination. It is the Loggia de' Lanzi itself, however, with its vast and noble arches and vaulted ceiling, that especially arrests the visitor in Florence. The construction is the most beautiful blending of the Greek with the Gothic. The bronze group of Judith and Holofernes, the work of Donatello, was created for Cosimo Vecchio, and until 1694, it was in the private palace of the Medici; and on their expulsion from Florence it was placed in the Loggia.

The Piazza della Signoria is one of the most deeply impressive and suggestive of any in Florence. Here, where now the Fountain of Neptune, surrounded by Tritons, stands, was the spot on which Savonarola and his two companions were executed. At one corner, in an old palace, is a bas-relief, representing Christ, with the inscription underneath, "*Omnis Sapientia a Domino Deo est*," and on the façade the Lily of Florence can still be discerned. It is hardly possible to contemplate the scene of this tragedy of more than four hundred years ago without recalling to mind the celebrated Pico della Mirandola, who lived to be ninety-one years of age,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

and who was an enthusiastic disciple of Savonarola. It was his influence that led Lorenzo di Medici to recall the celebrated monk when he was banished from Florence, and to appoint him preacher in the Duomo.

Marsilio Ficino, in his biography of Pico della Mirandola, says that on a day when the door of the mystic temple, the Platonic Academy of Florence, lay open to all who could construe Latin, there was introduced into the study "where a lamp burned continually before the bust of Plato, as other men burned lamps before their favourite saints, a young man fresh from a journey, *of feature and shape seemly and beautiful, of stature goodly and high, of flesh tender and soft, his visage lovely and fair, his color white, intermingled with comely reds, his eyes gray, and quick of look, his teeth white and even, his hair yellow and abundant, and trimmed with more than the usual artifice of the time.*"

Florence, as Renan has more than once pointed out, had a peculiar appreciation for Plato's philosophy, while other Italian cities inclined more to that of Aristotle.

The early meetings of the Platonic Academy were held in the Villa Medici at Careggi, which

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

dates back to 1417, when it was purchased by Cosimo il Vecchio, who died there in 1664; and in this village also occurred the death of Lorenzo il Magnifico. To the latter-day visitor there seems to be pictured in the very air the scene thus vividly described by Professor Pasquale Villari:—

“Lorenzo on that day was more conscious than he had yet been that his death was near at hand. He had called his son Pietro to him, to give him his parting advice, and bid him a last farewell. When his friends, who were not allowed to be present at that interview, returned to the chamber, and had made his son retire — as his presence agitated Lorenzo too much — he expressed a wish to see Pico della Mirandola again, who immediately hastened to him. It appeared as if the sweet expression of that benevolent and gentle young man had soothed him a little, for he said to him, ‘I should have died unhappy if I had not first been cheered by a sight of thy face.’ Pico had no sooner retired than Savonarola entered and approached respectfully the bed of the dying Lorenzo, who said that there were three sins he wished to confess to

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

him, and for which he asked absolution: the sacking of Volterra; the money taken from the *Monte delle Fanciulle*, which had caused so many deaths; and the blood shed after the conspiracy of the Pazzi. While saying this he again became agitated, and Savonarola tried to calm him, by frequently repeating, 'God is good, God is merciful!' Lorenzo had scarcely left off speaking, when Savonarola added, 'Three things are required of you.' 'And what are they, father?' replied Lorenzo. Savonarola's countenance became grave, and, raising the fingers of his right hand, he thus began: 'First, it is necessary that you should have a full and lively faith in the mercy of God.' 'That I have most fully.' 'Secondly, it is necessary to restore that which you unjustly took away, or enjoin your sons to restore it for you.' This requirement appeared to cause him surprise and grief; however, with an effort, he gave his consent by a nod of his head. Savonarola then rose up, and while the dying prince shrank with terror upon his bed, the confessor seemed to rise above himself when saying, 'Lastly, you must restore liberty to the people of Florence.' His countenance was solemn, his voice almost terrible; his eyes, as if to read the

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

answer, remained fixed intently on those of Lorenzo, who, collecting all the strength that nature had left him, turned his back on him scornfully, without uttering a word. And thus Savonarola left him without giving him absolution; and the Magnificent, lacerated by remorse, soon after breathed his last."

There is a legend in Florence that on the night of Lorenzo's death a train of lights flitted in the air between the Villa Medici and the Duomo, illuminating the city.

Lingering day after day in San Marco and in other haunts of Savonarola, George Eliot seemed to assimilate fairly the spirit of his teachings and re-create them in her marvellous depiction of the character and life of Savonarola in her Florentine romance, "Romola." From the Frate, Romola learns the lessons of the higher wisdom. Savonarola is represented as saying to her: —

"You are seeking your own will, my daughter. You are seeking some good other than the law you are bound to obey. But how will you find good? It is not a thing of choice: it is a river that flows from the foot of the Invisible Throne,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

and flows by the path of obedience. I say again, man cannot choose his duties. You may choose to forsake your duties, and choose not to have the sorrow they bring. But you will go forth ; and what will you find, my daughter ? Sorrow without duty — bitter herbs, and no bread with them."

And again : —

" You would feel that Florence was the home of your soul as well as your birthplace, because you would see the work that was given you to do there. If you forsake your place, who will fill it ? You ought to be in your place now, helping in the great work by which God will purify Florence, and raise it to be the guide of the nations."

No biography of Savonarola or history of his period could offer so vital an interpretation of him in all his passion of piety and patriotism, as does George Eliot in these counsels that he is portrayed as offering to Romola.

" The higher life begins for us, my daughter, when we renounce our own will to bow before a

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

Divine law. That seems hard to you. It is the portal of wisdom, and freedom, and blessedness. And the symbol of it hangs before you. That wisdom is the religion of the Cross. And you stand aloof from it: you are a pagan; you have been taught to say, 'I am as the wise men who lived before the time when the Jew of Nazareth was crucified.' And that is your wisdom! To be as the dead whose eyes are closed, and whose ear is deaf to the work of God that has been since their time. What has your dead wisdom done for you, my daughter? It has left you without a heart for the neighbors among whom you dwell, without care for the great work by which Florence is to be regenerated and the world made holy; it has left you without a share in the Divine life which quenches the sense of suffering Self in the ardors of an ever-growing love. And now, when the sword has pierced your soul, you say, 'I will go away; I cannot bear my sorrow.' And you think nothing of the sorrow and the wrong that are within the walls of the city where you dwell; you would leave your place empty, when it ought to be filled with your pity and your labor. If there is wickedness in the streets, your steps should shine with

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

the light of purity ; if there is a cry of anguish, you, my daughter, because you know the meaning of the cry, should be there to still it. My beloved daughter, sorrow has come to teach you a new worship ; the sign of it hangs before you."

And how his devotion to Florence is revealed in these words to her : —

"My daughter, you are a child of Florence ; fulfil the duties of that great inheritance. Live for Florence — for your own people, whom God is preparing to bless the earth. Bear the anguish and the smart. The iron is sharp — I know, I know — it rends the tender flesh. The draught is bitterness on the lips. But there is rapture in the cup — there is the vision which makes all life below it dross forever."

Among Landor's "Imaginary Conversations" is one between Savonarola and the Prior of Florence ; but the matchless vitality and power of George Eliot's interpretation of the personality of Savonarola, as given in "Romola," stands unrivalled and unapproached.

The period of Landor's residence in Florence included a wide range of rich and choice liter-

FROM FIESOLE TO VALLOMBROSA

ary production. Aside from the immortal poem, "Aurora Leigh" and other great works of Mrs. Browning; the "Christmas Eve" and "Easter Day" of Robert Browning, written in 1850; the many lyrics of both the married poets; George Eliot's great Florentine romance, "Romola;" the somewhat voluminous works of Thomas Adolphus Trollope; the Italian Note Books of Hawthorne; poems, essays, and history by many other authors; Landor's own greatest work, the "Imaginary Conversations,"—in all these is preserved, as in amber, the literary spirit of the day, with phases of its life and interpretation of many of its great personalities. Not that all these creations were actually written in Florence: "Romola," was written in London; "Aurora Leigh," begun in Florence, was continued in Paris and completed in London; but, largely, they all owed their inspiration to Tuscan air. And the glories of art in the galleries and the churches with legend and myth and poetic association, have been distilled by the alembic of literature from San Miniato to Fiesole, from Bellosguardo to Vallombrosa.

70

Only so much do I know as I have lived. . . . As the world was plastic and fluid in the hands of God, so is it ever to so much of His attributes as we bring to it. To ignorance and sin it is flint : but in proportion as a man has anything in him divine, the firmament flows before him and takes his signet and form. . . . The day is always his who works in it with serenity and great aims.

EMERSON.

How shall we know when he comes for whom are these garlands of bay ?

How single him forth from the many that pass and repass on their way ?

Easily may ye discern him, and beckon him forth from the throng ;

Ye surely shall know him by this, — he hath slept on the mountains of song.

Know by the dew on his raiment, his forehead, and clustering hair ;

Dew of the night on Parnassus he for a token shall wear.

EDITH THOMAS.

III

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

"Lilled whiteness shone upon
Not by light of moon or sun."

FULL of charm and brilliancy was the life of that inner circle in Florence with whom Parnassus was familiar ground, whose social interludes were enjoyed in that scenic Florentine background of incomparable beauty. There was some new excursion for every hour in the day. A happy party would fare forth for the old Boboli gardens and climb the little hill for the view over Florence and the Val d'Arno. There were moonlight gatherings on the terrace of some old palazzo, where Italian politics and poetry were discussed over tea and strawberries, or chance encounters in galleries or churches, where the conversational interludes of sympathetic companionship were resumed.

Even in the Florence of to-day, as in that of Landor, the social life is one of such charm as to make Florence, from the point of the intimate

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

view, something very different from the city of the mere tourist. To the latter, indeed, it is lovely enough to repay a journey thither—a thousand journeys; but if to the infinite interest of its art and scenic effects one may be so fortunate as to add the still deeper interest of its social life, it becomes, indeed, the most fascinating of places. For in no city in the world is there more exquisitely cultured society than in Florence. It is a society of scholars, a society of the utmost accomplishment, a society including poets, artists, and thinkers. Its members are linguists, equally at home in three or four of the modern languages; they are people who have seen and know the best there is in the world—of society, art, and letters.

The receptions given in Florence in these grand old palaces and historic villas might almost be stage scenes, set in perfection of beauty. The vast salons hung with tapestries, rich in sculpture; the paintings in the heavily carved Florentine frames; the great mirrors whose expanse in the past has reflected images and scenes long since vanished; with always a wealth of flowers; with rare books and bric-a-brac,—all the nameless objects and details that contribute to the ar-

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

tistic atmosphere of rooms, — in these vast salons the groups of people gather and seem almost like some pictures suddenly summoned by means of magic or necromancy out of the historic past. There is a resplendence of the golden atmosphere as of phantasmagoria, rather than the actual reality of to-day.

Among the earliest friends of the Brownings was Mr. Hiram Powers, the American sculptor, of whom Robert Browning speaks as “a most charming, straightforward, genial American, who sometimes comes and takes coffee with us, as simple as the man of genius he has proved himself to be.” At this time Mr. Powers was domiciled in the Via dei Serragli, on the “other side” of the river, and was therefore quite near Casa Guidi. The Hawthornes were in the same street, almost opposite Mr. Powers, in the Casa del Bello, which Mr. Julian Hawthorne, in his biography of his father, describes as “a fresh and bright edifice . . . a house all light and grace,” with a terrace extending on one side. A little farther up the street toward Porta Romana were the Torrigiani Gardens. At this time visitors to the studio of Mr. Powers were interested in his bust of Proserpine and in the statue of the fisher-boy hold-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

ing a shell to his ear, — a work which captivated the fancy of Mrs. Browning. The Casa Bello allured the Hawthornes with its spacious suite of rooms extending around the four sides of a small court, with lofty, frescoed ceilings and sumptuous hangings, and the usual Italian profusion of marble tables, mirrors, and upholstered furniture. The terrace was a constant delight to Hawthorne where he sat daily, — in what ethereal dreams who may tell?

“ Ah! who shall lift that wand of magic power
And the lost clew regain?
The unfinished window in Aladdin's tower
Unfinished must remain!”

The Brownings, Isa Blagden, and Mr. Powers and his family seem to have made the nearer circle for Hawthorne at this time. Mrs. Browning somewhere chronicles that Mr. Story represented Hawthorne as “not silent only by shyness, but by nature and inaptitude, . . . a man “who talks exclusively with his pen.” But the records of these days, written in invisible ink, disclose, when chemically treated, that William Cullen Bryant and his daughter visited Florence about this time, and that Hawthorne, after calling on them at their hotel, passed an evening with them and

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

others at the Brownings', in Casa Guidi ; and that indeed, between Casa Guidi and Casa Bello the pathway was kept open. At one of Isa Blagden's weekly receptions Hawthorne met Browning, Trollope, and Frank Boott, and notes the "effervescent aroma" of Mr. Browning's genial conversation. Mr. Trollope he characterized as "sensible and cultivated." Isa Blagden was sometimes his companion in rambling about Florence, for Hawthorne found the beautiful town to be a paradise for the saunterer, and he loitered on the Ponte Carraja, and at the opening between the houses on Ponte Vecchio that so frames a picture of river and palaces ; and there were few churches that he did not look into, though of all those the Duomo most appealed to him, because of the intense glory and beauty of the painted windows. "It is a pity anybody should die without seeing an antique painted window with the bright Italian sun shining through it," he said. One late afternoon, especially, when the great writer had wandered into the Duomo, where, in the glass-encased space around the high altar, the priests and white-robed acolytes were chanting the afternoon service, he was fairly dazzled by the brightness of their wonderful windows, "like a

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

million rubies, sapphires, topazes, and emeralds" massed together.

Browning seems to have called frequently on the Hawthornes in Casa Bello, always leaving a new impression of genial grace and unaffected cordiality.

There was one afternoon that seemed to sit for its picture when Mr. Hawthorne and Isa Blagden drove together to call on Mr. Kirkup, whose weird and curious personality constantly appears in all this grouping of Florentine visitors. "Such a tragic face the old man has, with his bleak, white beard," said Mrs. Browning of him. Mr. Kirkup was quite celebrated in his day as an antiquarian, to which he added the less enviable fame of being considered a necromancer. At all events, he was greatly interested in the "spirit rappings" of those days, the well-known medium, Hume, being then in Florence and holding *séances*, which attracted Mrs. Browning, the Trollopes, Hawthorne, and others. Mr. Kirkup, indeed, enjoyed the luxury of keeping a private medium of his own in his house, — an Italian peasant woman, — through whose ministrations he believed he held converse with Dante and with various dead kings and emperors. In an old palace overhanging the

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

Arno, Mr. Kirkup had domiciled himself close to the Ponte Vecchio, from whose outer portal a dark staircase led up to his rooms. Hawthorne, writing of his own and Isa Blagden's call on the antiquarian one summer afternoon,¹ says :—

“Knocking at the door we were received by him. He had had notice of our visit and was prepared for it, being dressed in a blue frock coat of rather an old fashion, with a velvet collar, and in a thin waist-coat and pantaloons fresh from the drawer, looking very sprucely, in short. . . . He is rather low of stature, with a pale, shrivelled face, and hair and beard perfectly white, with the hair of a particularly soft and silken texture ; his eyes have a queer, rather wild look, and the eyebrows are arched above them, so that he seems all the time to be seeing something that strikes him with surprise. . . . His whole make-up is delicate, his hands white and small, and his appearance and manners those of a gentleman. He appeared to be very nervous, tremulous, indeed, to his fingers' ends, without being in any way disturbed or embarrassed by our presence.

“He ushered us through two or three large rooms, dark, dusty, hung with antique looking

¹ French and Italian Note Books.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

pictures and lined with book-cases containing, I doubt not, a very curious library. Indeed he directed my attention to one case, and said that he had collected these works in former days merely for the sake of laughing at them. They were books of magic and occult sciences. What he seemed really to value, however, were some manuscript copies of Dante, of which he showed us two: one a folio or parchment beautifully written in German text, the letters as clear and accurately cut as printed type; the other a small volume, fit, as Mr. Kirkup said, to be carried in a capacious mediæval sleeve. This also was on vellum and as elegantly executed as the larger one; but the larger had beautiful illuminations, the vermilion and gold of which looked as brilliant now as they did five centuries ago.

“Both of these books were written early in the fourteenth century. Mr. Kirkup has also a plaster cast of Dante’s face, which he believes to be the original and taken from his face after death; and he has likewise his own accurate tracing from Giotto’s fresco of Dante in the Chapel of the Borgello. This fresco was discovered through Mr. Kirkup’s means, and the tracing is particularly valuable. . . . It represents



DANTE ALIGHIERI.

From the Portrait discovered in the Frescoes by Giotto, in the Bargello, Florence.

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

the profile of a youthful but melancholy face, and has the general outline of Dante's features in other portraits.

"Dante has held frequent communications with Mr. Kirkup through a medium, the poet being described by a medium as wearing the same dress seen in the youthful portrait, but as bearing more resemblance to the cast taken from the dead face than to the picture from his youthful one.

"There was a very good picture of Savonarola in one of the rooms, and many other portraits, paintings, and drawings, some of them ancient, and some of them the work of Mr. Kirkup himself. He has the torn fragment of an exquisite drawing of a nude figure by Rubens, and a portfolio of other curious drawings."

Hawthorne and Mr. Landor never met. To accurately determine the matter the writer of this volume wrote to Mr. Julian Hawthorne, asking the question, to which he courteously replied:—

"... My father never met Landor. He did not loom so large then as he does now—and my father never, that I know of, made a pilgrimage

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

of piety to any living person. He was too modest to think himself an object of interest, and did not consider his own interest in any person a warrant to intrude upon them.

“Thanking you for your kindness, I am

“very sincerely yours

“JULIAN HAWTHORNE”

The personality of Mr. Kirkup runs through the Florentine days from the time of Leigh Hunt's visit in 1828 to that of the death of Landor in 1864, when Mr. Hunt was in Mariano, on the Fiesolan hills, where he looked from his window on the “Valley of the Ladies” of the “Decameron.” Mr. Kirkup, Charles Armitage Brown, and Landor formed his intimate group. A little later came Hazlitt; and it was Mr. Kirkup who introduced him to Landor, in the spring of 1825. “I perfectly remember Hazlitt's visit,” said Mr. Kirkup in later years. “He wished to pay Landor a visit, but was advised not, unless he was well introduced. Armitage Brown, who was Landor's greatest friend here, offered him a letter; but Hazlitt said he would beard the lion in his den, and he walked up to his house one winter's morning in nankeen shorts and white stockings; was

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

made much of by the royal animal; and often returned—at night; for Landor was much out in the day, in all weathers.”

Mr. Kirkup was the recognized authority on Dante, in his circle in Florence, and when Landor published his “*Pentameron*,” Mr. Kirkup took exception to the title of “*Messer*” as used by Landor. The complete title of the book is: “*The Pentameron; or Interviews of Messer Giovanni Boccaccio and Messer Francesco Petrarca, when said Messer Giovanni lay infirm at Villetta hard by Certaldo: after which they saw not each other on our Side of Paradise: shewing how they discoursed upon that famous Theologian Messer Dante Alighieri, and sundry other Matters.*” Mr. Kirkup remarked that it was as much of an error for Landor to have alluded to Dante as “*Messer*” as it would be if some Italian critic had called himself Sir Landor. “In all the legal documents I have of the sale of Peter Dante’s estate he is called *Dominus Petrus filius Dantii Allighierii*: *Dominus* being the Latin for Lord or Messire, the title applied to a judge in the republic, while poor Dante is named as a common citizen in the same legal deeds in which his son is always styled Messire, or *Dominus*,”

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

added Mr. Kirkup. Mr. Forster, Landor's biographer, in speaking of "The Pentameron," gives this pleasant little picture of the way in which the work was suggested to Landor:—

"I have spoken of the memories of Boccaccio that were on all sides of Landor at his villa, from whose gate up to the gates of Florence there was hardly a street or farm that the great story-teller had not associated with some witty or affecting narrative. The place was peopled by his genius with creatures that neither seasons nor factions had been able to change. Happy and well founded was the prediction of his friend, that long before the 'Decameron' would cease to be recited under their arching vines, the worms would be the only fighters for Guelph or Ghibelline; and that even under so terrible a visitation as another plague, its pages would remain a solace to all who could find refuge and relief in letters.

"Such a refuge and relief had they been to Landor in every plague by which he had been visited, and this book was payment for a portion of the debt. Boccaccio is its hero; and the idea of it was doubtless taken from his letter to Petrarca accompanying the copy of Dante transcribed by himself for his use, inviting him to look more

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

closely into it, and if possible to admire it more. In his illness at Certaldo he is visited by his friend ; during interviews that occupy five several days, the Divine Comedy is the subject of their talk ; and very wonderful talk it is that can make any subject, however great, the centre of so wide a range of scholarship and learning and of such abounding wealth of illustration, can press into the service of argument such a delightful profusion of metaphor and imagery, can mingle humor and wit with so much tenderness and wisdom, and clothe in language of consummate beauty so much dignity and variety of thought. But amidst it all we never lose our interest in the simple and kindly old burgess of Certaldo and his belongings ; his little maid Assunta and her lover ; even the rascally old frate confessor, who suggests his last witty story : and not more delightful is the grave Petrarca when his eloquence is at its best, than in the quaint little scene where Assuntina has to girth up his palfrey for him."

Mr. Kirkup recalled in his later years many characteristic anecdotes and events in Landor's early life, one of which was the termination of Landor's relations with the Villa Medici, where

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

he first lived. "I remember one day," narrates Mr. Kirkup, "when Landor lived in the Medici palace, he wrote to the marquis, and accused him of having allured away his coachman. The marquis, I should tell you, enjoyed no very good name, and this had exasperated Landor the more. Mrs. Landor was sitting in the drawing-room the day after, where I and some others were, when the marquis came strutting in without removing his hat. But he had scarcely advanced three steps from the door when Landor walked up to him quickly and knocked his hat off, then took him by the arm and turned him out. You should have heard Landor's shout of laughter at his own anger when it was all over, inextinguishable laughter which none of us could resist. Immediately after he sent the marquis warning by the hands of a policeman, which is reckoned an affront, and quitted his house at the end of the year."

Nearly all Mr. Kirkup's life had been passed in Florence; but when he was over eighty years of age he betook himself to Leghorn, where he died. Of his belief in the manifestations of spiritualistic phenomena by Mr. Home and by the Italian woman medium whom he kept in his

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

own house, Thomas Adolphus Trollope speaks somewhat at length in his reminiscences, and says that these phenomena convinced Mr. Kirkup of the existence of immortality, in which he had not previously believed. Mr. Trollope¹ also relates the following incident:—

“My wife, my wife’s sister, and myself had been spending the evening in the house of Mr. Seymour Kirkup, an artist, who, once well-known in the artistic world, lived on in Florence to a great age after that world had forgotten him. . . . Our visit was to witness some of the medium’s performances. . . .” The Trollopes felt sure that the phenomena they witnessed were manufactured fraudulently by the medium, “although,” Mr. Trollope remarks, “we knew poor old Kirkup far too well to make any attempt to convict her.”

Mr. Trollope continues:—

“But as we walked home, with our minds full of the subject, we said, ‘Let us try whether we can produce any effect upon a table, since that seems the regulation first-step in these mys-

¹ “What I Remember.”

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

teries; and, at least, we shall have the certainty of not being befooled by trickery.' So, on reaching home, we took a table—rather a remarkable one. It was small, not above eighteen or twenty inches across the top of it. But it was *very* much heavier than any ordinary table of that size, the stem of it being a massive bit of ancient chestnut-wood carving which I had adapted to that purpose.

“Well, in a minute or two the table began to move very unmistakably. We were startled, and began to think that the ladies' dresses must have, unconsciously to them, pressed against it. We stood back therefore, taking care that nothing but the tips of our fingers touched the table. It still moved! We said that some unconscious exertion of muscular force must have caused the movement, and, finally, we suspended our fingers about an inch or so above the surface of the table, taking the utmost care to touch it in no way whatever. The table still turned, and that to such an extent that, entirely untouched, it turned itself over, and fell to the ground.

“I can only observe of this, as the little boy said who was accused of relating an impossibility

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

as a fact, 'I don't say it is possible, I only say it is true!'

Robert Browning's attitude toward all these curious manifestations that attracted so much attention in Florence in the early fifties is sufficiently indicated in his "Mr. Sludge: the Medium." Hawthorne records much of it in his "Note Books" and says that in all the numerous instances he still felt a sense of unreality. Mrs. Browning's attitude toward these phenomena that were manifested so persistently in Florence at this time as to attract the attention of all visitors, was one of intelligent discrimination rather than any foolish credulity or equally foolish denial of evident facts. "For my own part," she says, in alluding to her religious convictions, "I have thought freely on most subjects, but never, at any point of my life, have I felt myself drawn toward Unitarian opinions. I should throw up revelation altogether if I ceased to recognize Christ as divine. . . . I have gone on predicting that the present churches were in course of dissolution and would have to be followed by a reconstruction of Christian essential verity into other than these middle ages scholastic forms.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Believing in Christ's divinity, which is the life of Christianity, I believed this. . . . I should fear for a revealed religion incapable of expansion according to the needs of man. What comes from God has life in it, and certainly from all the growth of living things, spiritual growth cannot be excepted. . . . As to the supernatural, if you mean by that the suspension of natural law, I certainly believe in it no more than you do. What happens, happens according to a natural law, the development of which only becomes fuller and more observable. . . . Every fact is a word of God. We have to learn — we in the body — that death does not teach all things. Foolish Jack Smith who died on Monday is on Tuesday still foolish Jack Smith. If people who on Monday scorned his opinions prudently, will on Tuesday receive his least words as oracles, they very naturally do something as foolish as their inspirer is. . . . Hein ! . . . if you are in a dungeon and a friend knocks through the outer wall, spelling out the words you comprehend, you don't think the worse of the friend in the sun who remembers you."

Mrs. Browning and Mrs. Stowe discussed in a prolonged correspondence the problem involved

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

in these curious manifestations in Florence, and of Mrs. Stowe's convictions Mrs. Browning thus writes in a letter¹ to a friend : —

“ Mrs. Stowe had heard, she said, for the fifth time from her boy (the one who was drowned in that awful manner through carrying out a college jest) without any seeking on her part. She gave me a minute account of a late manifestation, not seeming to have a doubt in respect to the verity and identity of the spirit. In fact, secret things were told, reference to private papers made, the evidence was considered most satisfying. And she says that all of the communications descriptive of the *state* of that Spirit, though coming from very different mediums (some high Calvinists and others low infidels) tallied exactly. She spoke very calmly about it, with no dogmatism, but with the strongest disposition to receive the facts of the subject with all their bearings, and at whatever loss of orthodoxy or sacrifice of reputation for common sense. I have a high appreciation of her power of forming opinions, let me add to this. It is one of the most vital and growing minds I ever knew. Besides the in-

¹ “The Letters of Elisabeth Barrett Browning.” By kind permission of Messrs. Harper and Brothers.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

ventive, the critical and analytical faculties are strong with her. How many women do you know who are *religious*, and yet analyze point by point what they believe in? She lives in the midst of the traditional churches, and is full of reverence by nature; and yet if you knew how fearlessly that woman has torn up the old ceremonies and taken note of what is a dead letter within, yet preserved her faith in essential spiritual truth, you would feel more admiration for her than even for writing 'Uncle Tom.' There are quantities of irreverent women and men who profess infidelity. But this is a woman of another order, observe, devout yet brave in the outlook for truth, and considering, not whether a thing be *sound*, but whether it be true. Her views are Swedenborgian on some points, beyond him where he departs from orthodoxy on one or two points, adhering to the orthodox creed on certain others."

No city, perhaps, from the days of the myth and miracles of the saints to the present hour, has had its daily life so characterized by these wonders as Florence; and the Hawthornes, Trollopes, and Mrs. Browning were especially

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

interested, during several months, in studying these psychic occurrences.

Among other charming visitors came Mr. Lytton (Owen Meredith), afterwards Lord Lytton, arriving in the midst of all this tumult. Already inclined to great interest in magic and the occult sciences, he gave much time to personal observation and experiment. Still another pleasant centre of friendly intercourse was made in Florence by Mr. Lytton during his stay, as he took a villa on Bellosguardo, and on one July evening in 1853 he gave a reception, on his terrace, when Mrs. Browning made the tea, and strawberries and ices were served to the guests, who looked down upon Florence lying under the stars "dissolving in the purple of the hills." Frederic Tennyson, a brother of the poet-laureate, was one of the group, and also Senatore Villari, an accomplished young Sicilian. Mr. Kinney, the American Minister to the Court of Turin, and Mrs. Kinney, (better known as Elizabeth Coates Kinney the poet-mother of a poet-son, Edmund Clarence Stedman) were then in Florence. Mrs. Kinney was one of the nearer friends of Mrs. Browning, and they, with young Lytton and Mr. Tennyson, often passed an even-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

ing in Casa Guidi with the Brownings. Mr. Lytton was at that time attached to the Legation in Florence, and it is interesting to read Mrs. Browning's impressions of the future Ambassador to Florence and Viceroy of India, when she says: "Full of all sorts of good and nobleness he really is; gifted with high faculties and given to the highest aspirations. . . . He is about to publish a collection of his poems. I think highly of his capabilities."

The poet Tennyson made a brief visit in Florence on his way to Rome during this period of the early fifties; and also Thackeray and Dickens sojourned there. Of the visit of Mr. Dickens, John Forster afterward wrote:—

"Ten years after Landor had lost this home, an Englishman travelling in Italy, his friend and mine, visited the neighborhood for his sake, drove out from Florence to Fiesole, and asked his coachman which was the villa in which the Landor family lived. He was a dull dog, and pointed to Boccaccio's. I didn't believe him. He was so deuced ready that I knew he lied. I went up to the convent, which is on a height, and was leaning over a dwarf wall basking in the noble view over

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

a vast range of hill and valley, when a little peasant girl came up and began to point out the localities. *Ecco la villa Landora!* was one of the first half-dozen sentences she spoke. My heart swelled almost as Landor's would have done when I looked down upon it, nestling among its olive-trees and vines, and with its upper windows (there are five above the door) open to the setting sun. Over the centre of these there is another story, set upon the housetop like a tower; and all Italy, except its sea, is melted down into the glowing landscape it commands. I plucked a leaf of ivy from the convent garden as I looked; and here it is. For Landor. With my love. So wrote Mr. Dickens to me from Florence on the 2d of April, 1845; and when I turned over Landor's papers in the same month after an interval of exactly twenty years, the ivy-leaf was found carefully enclosed, with the letter in which I had sent it."

Another interesting visitor was Count Pulsky, a friend of Kossuth, who shared his exile as a political refugee of Hungary. Together Kossuth and Count Pulsky also visited Boston in the decade of 1850-60, and were warm friends of the great and good Elizabeth Peabody.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Margaret Fuller, Marchese d'Ossoli, with her husband and child, established herself in Florence for some weeks, in an old palazzo at the corner of the Via della Misericordia and the Piazza Santa Maria Novella. Before her windows rose the Campanile, seen against the blue Italian sky. Giving the mornings to her literary work, the evenings were devoted to her friends, among whom were included the Brownings and the Marchesa Arconati Visconti, an Italian lady of great charm and sweetness. A visitor to Madame d'Ossoli's apartment in Florence gives this picture of her at home : —

“I cannot remember ever to have found Madame d'Ossoli alone, on those evenings when she remained at home. Her husband was always with her. The picture of their room rises clearly on my memory. A small square room, sparingly, yet sufficiently furnished, with polished floor and frescoed ceiling, — and, drawn up closely before the cheerful fire, an oval table, on which stood a monkish lamp of brass, with depending chains that support quaint classic cups for the olive oil. There, seated beside his wife, I was sure to find the Marchese, reading from some patriotic book,

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

and dressed in the dark brown, red-corded coat of the Guardia Civica, which it was his melancholy pleasure to wear at home. So long as the conversation could be carried on in Italian, he used to remain, though he rarely joined in it to any considerable degree; but if a number of English and American visitors came in, he used to take his leave and go to the Café d'Italia, being very unwilling, as Madame d'Ossoli told me, to impose any seeming restraint, by his presence, upon her friends, with whom he was unable to converse. For the same reason, he rarely remained with her at the houses of her English or American friends, though he always accompanied her thither, and returned to escort her home."

Mrs. Browning found Madame d'Ossoli, the celebrated American woman, extremely interesting in personal conversation; "but," remarked Mrs. Browning, "if I wished any one to do Madame d'Ossoli justice, I should say, 'Never read what she has written.' Her written words are just *naught*. Her letters are individual and full of that magnetic personal influence which was so strong in her. . . . I felt drawn to her. I loved

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

her, and the circumstances of her death struck me to the very roots of my heart. The comfort is that she lost little in this world."

The Marchese and Marchesa d'Ossoli had passed their last evening in Florence with Mrs. Browning, before sailing on the fatal voyage, and of this last meeting Mrs. Browning wrote to Miss Mitford: "Such gloom she had in leaving Italy! She was full of sad presentiment! Do you know she gave a Bible as a parting gift from her child to ours, writing in it, '*In memory of Angelo Eugene d'Ossoli*,' — a strange, prophetic expression. That last evening," continued Mrs. Browning, "an old prophecy made to the Marquis d'Ossoli, that he should shun the sea as it would be fatal to him, was talked of jestingly."

Mrs. Harriet Beecher Stowe did not meet Landor at the time she visited Florence, — he may have been absent on one of his visits to England, — but he highly estimated the quality of her genius, and when her story, "The Minister's Wooing," was published, Landor read it eagerly and declared that no man living had given to the world so excellent a novel. Mrs. Browning and Mrs. Stowe became warm friends, and their correspondence continued throughout Mrs. Brown-

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

ing's life. At their parting, when Mrs. Stowe left Florence, her last words to Mrs. Browning were : "Those who love the Lord Jesus Christ never see one another for the last time." The words almost paraphrase an ancient Oriental aphorism, — "Those who meet in good never separate."

In the meantime happy years were gliding by in Casa Guidi, where the wedded poets were giving to the world their poems ; reading the books, new and old, that drifted down to them ; seeing a few friends, and interesting themselves always in the world's important events. Harriet Hosmer, always a great favorite with Mrs. Browning, visited them from the Eternal City ; and John Kenyon, their most sympathetic friend and benefactor, came frequently from his English home. To Landor, too, came Mr. Kenyon, of whom Southey wrote (in 1847) that "everybody liked him at first sight, and liked him better the longer he was known ; that he had then himself known him three-and-twenty years ; that he was of all his friends one of the very best and pleasantest ; and that he reckoned as one of his whitest days the day he first fell in with him." "Kenyon had accomplishments of no ordinary kind," wrote John Forster of him, "and could

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

give and take with the best who assembled at his table. He wrote manly English verse, was a fair scholar, a good critic of books and art, an observer on whom unusual opportunities of seeing much of the world had not been thrown away ; and, in a familiar friendship with him of a quarter of a century, I never saw him use for mere personal display any one advantage he thus possessed. He was always thinking of others, always planning to get his own pleasure out of theirs ; and Landor in this respect was an untiring satisfaction to him. He displayed his enjoyment so thoroughly. The laugh was encouraged till the room shook again ; and, while Landor would defend to the death some indefensible position, assail with prodigious vigor an imaginary enemy, or blow himself and his adversary together into the air with the explosion of a joke, the radiant glee of Kenyon was a thing not to be forgotten. I have seen it shared at the same moment, in an equal degree, by Archdeacon Hare and Sir Robert Harry Inglis."

During Hawthorne's summer in Florence, as the days grew warm he removed to the Villa Mont-Auto on the heights of Bellosguardo. Not far away was the Villa Brichieri, where Isa Blag-

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

den had set up her household gods, and where, for a time, Miss Frances Power Cobbe came in the spring of 1860, sharing Miss Blagden's home and quite impressing their callers and visitors with her brilliant conversation. Miss Blagden was evidently a woman of the most sympathetic and responsive temperament, with a power of entering into close and beautiful relations with a very wide and various range of people. The many strong and altogether dissimilar individualities that composed this *cercle intime* all found some point of common meeting with "Isa," as they all called her. She was Mrs. Browning's most intimate friend, and a large proportion of the "Letters" of Mrs. Browning, published under the able and exquisite editorship of Mr. Frederick Kenyon, were written to Miss Blagden. To her, letters from Mrs. Browning simply wrote themselves,—so un-failing was the spiritual sympathy between them. The psychology of letter-writing would involve subtle analysis of spiritual magnetism. The quality of a letter really depends much more on the person to whom it is written than on the writer. It is something, or nothing, according to the quality of the spirit that attracts this expression. Letter-writing is therefore always a relative

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

and never an absolute capacity. "A letter is a spiritual gift," Emerson has well said, and like any other of the higher relations, it gives itself. A mere mechanical chronicle can always be produced ; but the real letter writes itself or it is not written.

A learned professor in the Smithsonian Institute has said that if any substance could be found that would effectually arrest magnetism, the secret of perpetual motion could be solved ; but as yet no such element could be found. The electric current can be stopped ; the magnetic current is as inevitable as is the attraction of gravitation. Nothing, so far as is yet known to science, can arrest it. The analogy between spiritual and terrestrial magnetism is impressed upon one. Nothing can possibly arrest the magnetic current of spiritual sympathy, and this relation between Mrs. Browning and Miss Blagden seemed a predestined one of temperamental sympathy.

In the Terrestrial Laboratory of the University of Catania in Sicily there is a geo-dynamic apparatus which registers, with the greatest accuracy of precision, the conditions of stability of the earth. The slightest variation is instantly

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

recorded by the pendulums, of the utmost delicacy of structure. These seismographs are all placed on tables of solid stone penetrating a hundred feet into the bed rock and protected by glass cases. They register the faintest tremor of the earth caused by internal forces, and these instruments are so sensitive that even the presence of a person standing near expands the steel and disturbs the adjustment. There are eight of these delicately adjusted instruments all connected by an electrical circuit. One cannot stand in this subterranean chamber watching these scientific appliances, so sensitive to the slightest breath, without perceiving their analogy to the spiritual life of man. There are natures that instantly register in the mental life any variation caused by the presence and the character of those with whom they come in contact. Mrs. Browning was pre-eminently one of these. The poet, by the very nature that predetermines a poet, must be

“ . . . musical,
Tremulous, impressional,”

and Mrs. Browning lived poetry as truly as she wrote it. She was one of whom it can truly be said that she never misapprehended, never under-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

valued any intention of kindness or courtesy. One instance of this is obvious in a little, undated note written to Kate Field, who was then, as a young girl, placed in the care of Miss Blagden. It would seem from the note that Miss Field, with something of the presumption of earliest youth, had proffered some suggestion of her own to Mrs. Browning, who does not, however, reject it as somewhat of an audacity, but replies, in an undated note :—

(After Villafranca.)

MY DEAR MISS FIELD,—I thank you for your excellent advice, and also the vision of your bright, earnest face given in the sight of your handwriting. Do observe that the “amnesty” full and entire, spoken of in “La foi des traites,” is just given in France. This is the “second phrase of the Empire,” and to be followed by a larger measure of liberal concessions.

Which confirms and verifies the book. For the writer, Napoleon walks under, as well as on, the earth. Now, in Italy, he is walking *under* ; but *walking*, — surely, — and we may congratulate one another in hope again.

Then for lesser hopes — we shall meet on the

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

dear terrace, all alive, I hope. And also I hope you will accompany Miss Blagden, my dear Isa (I can't leave a Miss Blagden so), when she comes to pay us a visit. It will give us pleasure, dear Miss Field, if you do.

Yours affectionately ever,

ELIZABETH B. BROWNING.

Another of these little notes to Kate Field (which have never before been published) runs :

(Florence, 1860.)

July 6.

DEAR FRIEND, — God bless you and yours for all your kindness, which I shall never forget ; I cannot write now — except to say this — and, besides, that I have had great comfort from the beginning. I know you are truth's self in all you profess to feel about her — she also loved you, as *you* felt. I shall see you soon and talk to you. Meantime and ever remember me as

Your affectionate E. B.

I speak to Mrs. Field also, you understand.

The sorrowful tone in this little note is in reference to the death of Mrs. Browning's sister, Henrietta, Mrs. Surtees Cook.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Miss Blagden seems to have been always near Mrs. Browning, whether in Florence or in the adjacent resorts to which they flitted in the summers. From Siena, Mrs. Browning wrote to an English friend : —

“ Dear Isa Blagden is spending the summer in a rough cabin, a quarter of an hour’s walk from here, and Mr. Landor is near by in the lane. This (with the Storys a mile off) makes a sort of colonization of the country here.”

Miss Frances Power Cobbe, who, as before noted, shared for a time Isa Blagden’s home in Villa Brichieri, was a brilliant acquisition to the Florentine circle. The two ladies drew around them an interesting company, both in their regular weekly receptions and for those unpremeditated social occasions that are so delightful. Robert Browning was one of their most familiar habitués ; and the Italian poet, Dall’ Ongaro, the Trollopes, Mrs. Stowe, and Miss Linda White (now Mme. Pasquale Villari) and others made up a salon of distinction. To Miss Blagden and Miss Cobbe Landor often came, and although he was then in his late eighties, he and Miss Cobbe rambled about Florence together while he poured out reminis-

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

cences of Southey and Shelley and other friends of his early life. Mme. Mario, Frederick Tenyson, and Mrs. Somerville were also among the nearer friends of Miss Cobbe, and Theodore Parker, with whom she had held a long and deeply interesting correspondence, came to Florence in the spring of 1860, only to pass on into the "life more abundant." After his death Miss Cobbe made some remark to Mrs. Stowe regarding the "end" of Theodore Parker's work, to which Mrs. Stowe replied, with an air of rebuke, "Do you think God has no work for Theodore Parker to do now?" Mrs. Somerville and Miss Cobbe appear to have devoted their genius largely to discussions of the character of Christ, and as to what conceptions the apostles held of Him, with the conversational zeal that would have done credit to Mr. Alcott's disciples in his School of Philosophy in Concord.

Harriet Hosmer, that "bewitching sprite," as Miss Cobbe calls her, flitted over from her Roman studio now and then, delighting all this famous circle with her irresistible charm. At that time Miss Hosmer had achieved her "Zenobia," her "Puck," her "Sleeping Faun" and her "Beatrice Cenci," and great things were prophesied for her.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Although Miss Hosmer has left on art a notable impress, she was destined to achieve a still finer and more permanent success by a noble and beautiful life which gladdened all who came within her influence, and was forever lofty and fair in its exquisite friendships and its sweet and liberal sympathy with all that is noblest in human progress.

Isa Blagden was the daughter of a strange union, that of an English gentleman and a Hindoo princess, and many Oriental characteristics were apparent in her temperament. She lived on in Florence until her death in 1878. Mme. Villari was with her at the last; and her grave in the little English cemetery is quite near that of Mrs. Browning.

Though not so famous in the literary world as his brother, Anthony Trollope, the novelist, Thomas Adolphus Trollope had already during these years achieved recognition for his "Girlhood of Catherine de' Medici," "A Decade of Italian Women," "Life of Filippo Strozzi," his novel, "La Beata," and other works, of which the most important is his "History of Florence," — an achievement which Professor Villari, the great scholar and incomparable biographer of

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

Machiavelli and of Savonarola, pronounced the best among the many histories of the Tuscan capital.

"The study of bygone Florentines had an interest for me which was quickened by the daily study of living Florentines," said Mr. Trollope of this work. All this group that made famous the social life of Florence during the middle years of the nineteenth century, were people with serious purposes in life, people engaged in serious work; but they were not without their appreciation of the nectar and ambrosia of living, and one of their special devices for securing these was by picnics. The favorite resort for festivity was at Protolino, a grand-ducal park belonging to some of the later Medici, some seven miles from Florence on the road to Bologna. The principal attraction at this place, Mr. Trollope relates, aside from the magnificent view over the thousand villas of the Val d' Arno, and over Florence enshrined in its purple hills, was the colossal figure designed by Michael Angelo, "the Appennino," so great that a platform holding four or five persons rested on the top of the head.

Mr. Trollope gossips pleasantly, in his "Reminiscences," of the American Minister to Florence

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

in those days, George P. Marsh, with his very lovely and attractive wife,—a man of liberal culture and a most accomplished philologist. To escape the intense heat of a Florentine summer he went to Vallombrosa, where he died, and his body was brought down the mountain on the shoulders of some of the young students of the School of Forestry on the height, who greatly loved and honored Mr. Marsh.

A Boston friend of the Brownings, Mr. George S. Hillard, was often at Casa Guidi, and long discussions of the classic and the Elizabethan poets were carried on by himself and Mr. Browning. Mr. Hillard remarked afterward that he found the conversation of Mr. Browning like the poetry of Chaucer, which enigmatic compliment remains to this day unexplained.

Mrs. Jameson, too, was a near friend and habituée of Casa Guidi, where her inability to play whist was less a matter of regret than at Mrs. Trollope's house. During these years Mrs. Jameson was assiduously visiting the various Italian cities, engaged in that monumental task of collating the legends and of writing the Commentaries on Italian art that make up the long list of her works. A gentle, refined, and melancholy

THE DEW OF PARNASSUS

personality, never escaping the shadow of the great grief that came into her life, she glides like a spectral figure through the illuminated chronicle, the social missal, of this brilliant group, during these Florentine years, when each one, it may be, of this "joyous company" may have —

"Heard the faint rustle of leaves astir in the breath of the
South,

Felt the soft lips of the dryad laid on his eyelids and mouth :

"So slept till the stars were all folded ; till, bright on the dim
mountain lawn,

The Muses came singing to wake him, pouring the wine of
the dawn !"

No sun could die nor yet be born unseen
By dwellers at my villa : morn and eve
Were magnified before us in the pure
Illimitable space and pause of sky,
Intense as angels' garments blanched with God,
Less blue than radiant. From the outer wall
Of the garden, drops the mystic floating grey
Of olive-trees (with interruptions green
From maize and vine), until 't is caught and torn
Upon the abrupt black line of cypresses
Which signs the way to Florence. Beautiful
The city lies along the ample vale,
Cathedral, tower and palace, piazza and street,
The river trailing like a silver cord
Through all, and curling loosely, both before
And after, over the whole stretch of land
Sown whitely up and down its opposite slopes
With farms and villas.

AURORA LEIGH.

All around him Patmos lies,
Who hath spirit-gifted eyes,
Who his happy sight can suit
To the great and the minute.
Doubt not but he holds in view
A new earth and heaven new;

*Doubt not but his ear doth catch
Strains nor voice nor reed can match ;
Many a silver, sphery note
Shall within his hearing float.*

.

*Manifold his fellowships :
Now the rocks their archives ope ;
Voiceless creatures tell their hope
In a language symbol-wrought ;
Groves to him sigh out their thought ;
Musings of the flower and grass
Through his quiet spirit pass.*

.

*All around him Patmos lies,
Who hath spirit-gifted eyes ;
He need not afar remove,
He need not the times reprove,
Who would hold perpetual lease
Of an isle in seas of peace.*

EDITH THOMAS.

IV

IDYLLIC HOURS IN FLORENTINE SAUNTERINGS

*"So on our soul the visions rise
Of that fair life we never lead."*

To the "spirit-gifted eyes" of painter and poet the vision of St. John at Patmos is ever being revealed. It assumes varied forms and offers many phases of significance; and if these "spirit-gifted eyes" open upon Florence, where the beauty of the past continually mingles with the present, the vision can hardly fail to catch an added glory whose "imprisoned splendor" remains through life, exalting and ennobling it. "The exceptional spiritual sensitiveness which characterizes men of genius makes them more susceptible to the permanent, the eternal, than are other men," says Dr. Hiram Corson, and this group that stood in such near relations to Landor during the last years of his life was composed of persons all peculiarly responsive to the unwritten charm of Florence. No one expressed this appreciation more vividly than Mrs. Browning, who wrote:

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

“What Florence is, the tongue of man or poet may easily fail to describe; the most beautiful of cities, with the golden Arno shot through the heart of her like an arrow, — exquisitely beautiful in its garden-ground of vineyards and olive trees.” This dream-life in the glorious city, with old tapestries and pre-Giotto pictures on the walls; with strains of wandering music ever haunting the air, with the masterpieces of the world lining the galleries, might well fascinate the imagination of these gifted spirits, — the Brownings with their infinite depth and power of great genius and great thought, and Mr. Story with his versatile talent and exquisite sensitiveness to impressions. The distinguishing characteristic of William Wetmore Story was a devotion to beauty. He was endowed with a temperament singularly sensitive to art influences in all her varied forms. Well known as author and sculptor, he was, besides, a painter, a musician, a critic, and his authorship included poetry, romance, biography, and criticism in the attractive form of conversations. It is an interesting speculation as to why a man so widely gifted, so singularly versatile, and one, too, who added to his scholarship a fine culture and the familiarity

IDYLLIC HOURS

with the best society of all cities, who had travelled extensively, and who had in all ways partaken of the best results of life, was not able to leave a deeper and a more permanent impress. Whatever is the gift which makes for greatness, Mr. Story did not possess. His art was æsthetic rather than spiritual. This was true in whatever form it manifested itself, whether poetry, painting, music, or sculpture. A courteous gentleman of polished manner, great refinement and elegance in ceremonial grace, delightful in conversation, he will live in the memory of all who knew him as a charming personality ; but he has left to the future the legacy, chiefly, of an unfaltering devotion to beauty. To her he builded his altar. She was the goddess of his life, his aim and inspiration. That instinct of form that made him the sculptor is seen in all his work. His writing is all polished and symmetrical, in its literary structure. There is in it nothing of any abiding intellectual or spiritual significance, but in his own way Mr. Story contributed much of signal value to progress ; for the culture of beauty, carried to the high degree of perfection to which he wrought it out, radiates an influence for the refinement and uplifting of life that cannot be calculated.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Judge Story, his father, was a celebrated jurist, and a graduate of Harvard. The younger Story showed in early youth more inclination to music than to any other art. He was graduated from Harvard in 1838, took a law course, and was admitted to the bar. He wrote, he modelled, he found it difficult to concentrate his attention on legal problems, and, finally, in 1847, betook himself to Italy, where he and the young wife he had married in 1843 (Miss Eldridge, of Cambridge), set up their household gods in the old Barberini palace in Rome, whence they enjoyed frequent interludes in Florence; and they also passed many summers in Siena with the Brownings for near neighbors and inseparable companions. "The Storys are at the top of the hill," wrote Mrs. Browning one summer day from Siena; "she and I go backward and forward on donkey-back to tea-drinking and gossiping at one another's houses and our husbands hold the reins." All this pleasantly informal *al fresco* intimacy pervaded their Siena summers. Mr. Story, as has been said, seems to have been endowed with facility rather than with great original power, but a facility so finely trained and cultured that it was not of that fatal order which too often ends in

IDYLLIC HOURS

mediocrity. Going abroad, he had sufficient resources on which to draw, so that he never knew the artist's traditional struggle with poverty. He was free to loiter on the terraces of the Frascata villa, to watch the panorama of light over the mysterious Campagna, to enter into the enchantment and the splendor of Italy. Mr. Story became a resident of Rome before its old, picturesque customs had disappeared. The Villa Ludovisi, embowered in ilexes, was then a haunt of beauty ; the Colonna gardens, with their broad slopes and shadowy glens, and the Forum and the palace of the Caesars were there with all their atmosphere of romance and of archaeological interest. Thus he entered upon a life lived in ideal regions.

The Story apartment in the famous old Barberini palace, above the Piazza del Tritone, included forty rooms. The Barberini is the most splendid private palace of Rome. It embodies the magnificence as well as the ambition of Urban VIII, by whom it was built in 1660. On the grand staircase is the lion, in high relief, found at Palestrina—the lion before which Canova used to lie studying for his design for the tomb of Clement XIII in St. Peter's. The

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

library in the Barberini palace contains many rare treasures. It has a collection of seven thousand manuscripts, brought together by Cardinal Francesco Barberini, a nephew of Urban VIII, and it contains letters of Galileo, of Bembo, manuscripts of Dante's, illuminated missals from Ghirlandajo, sketches of the old Roman houses in the fifteenth century, made by Sangallo; a Hebrew Bible, one of the twelve copies of the Sancino edition, and other world-renowned treasures.

At the very top of this old palace of the Barberinis is a small room decorated with bees, which are the emblem of the Barberini coat of arms, and in this room is a portrait of Urban VIII, and his will is also preserved there in a glass case. Cardinal Barberini was the last one of the papal nephews to hold an independent principality. It is said that Urban VIII complained of his three nephews and characterized the Cardinal as a saint who never worked a miracle, Antonio as a monk who had no patience, and the General as a soldier without a sword.

For more than half a century the Storys lived in the old Palazzo Barberini, their apartment being a treasure-house of art. The views from

IDYLLIC HOURS

every window were beautiful enough to repay a journey to Rome to gaze upon these alone. Looking across the Eternal City to the Janiculum, the dome of St. Peter's was silhouetted against the blue Italian sky, and the grandeur of the colossal Castle San Angelo, seen near, added an impressive feature to the landscape. Near the Barberini palace is the Fountain of Trevi, into whose waters every traveller casts his penny, that he may, according to tradition, insure his return to the city of his love and dreams.

From the first Mr. Story had the special advantages of fine and intelligent sympathy with his work and aims and the encouragement of recognition. Hawthorne, Lowell, and Longfellow were among his nearest friends. Hawthorne, in "The Marble Faun," made the studio of Mr. Story one of the prominent features of that wonderful romance of Rome. His statue of Cleopatra (now in the Metropolitan Museum in New York) was invested with world-wide fame for all the ages by Hawthorne's exquisite interpretation of its significance. It was in Rome that the Storys first met the Brownings, and the friendship formed between them continued for life.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

To turn back to the pages of "The Marble Faun" and read them, seeing Mr. Story presented under the guise of the young sculptor, Kenyon, is to gain a magic view of his early life in Rome, in such a paragraph of Hawthorne's, for instance, as this:—

"Kenyon's studio was in a cross street, or, rather, an ugly and dirty little lane" (Mr. Hawthorne writes), "between the Corso and the Via della Ripetta, and though chill, narrow, gloomy, and burdened with tall and shabby structures, the lane was not a whit more disagreeable than nine-tenths of the Roman streets. Over the door of one of the houses was a marble tablet, bearing an inscription to the purport that the sculptor's rooms within had formerly been occupied by the illustrious artist, Canova. In these precincts (which Canova's genius was not quite a character to render sacred, though it certainly made them interesting) the young American sculptor had now established himself."

And of Mr. Story's personal appearance we find Hawthorne saying:—

"The sculptor had a face which, when time should have done a little more for it, would offer

IDYLLIC HOURS

a worthy subject for as good an artist as himself, features finely cut, as if already marble ; an ideal forehead, deeply set eyes, and a mouth much hidden in a light-brown beard, but apparently sensitive and delicate."

Hawthorne's description of the statue of Cleopatra is an exquisite bit of artistic interpretation, which is, as a rule, much truer than mere art criticism.

Mr. Story made himself an important factor in all the European social and artistic life. His home became the resort of the noted poets, artists, statesmen, and cultivated travellers. Mrs. Story's receptions were famous in Rome for the brilliant circle she drew around her. Not a man of powerful original genius, Mr. Story will continue to hold a unique place among American artists. He had the temperament that absorbs and assimilates that to which it is attracted. His gifts did not equal Vedder's in creative force and in that wonderful insight which characterizes Mr. Vedder, and which is more than insight and becomes divination ; yet it was the part of Story to amass wealth and a wide reputation that could easily be mistaken for a wide fame,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

and to draw to himself a world of emoluments in general that the genius of Vedder has never compassed. Mr. Story's genius was of the assimilative order; Mr. Vedder's is of the creative. Mr. Story's imagination could fix itself on Cleopatra and cause her to live again in a wonderful embodiment in marble; but Mr. Vedder could see the "Dance of the Pleiades" and "The Fates Gathering in the Stars" and interpret the spiritual mysteries of life. Nothing in the profoundest depths of life ever revealed itself to Mr. Story, yet his very fine order of talent was so constantly fed from high sources, so polished and cultivated on all of its many-faceted sides, and sustained by such exquisite quality of taste that it is sometimes difficult to distinguish it from genius. He was born into a certain environment of refinement and culture that always remained with him through life. His first literary work was to write the biography of his father, Judge Story, an eminent jurist of the old Bay State, a work that included the editing of a large number of important letters from distinguished people; and one of his earliest commissions in art was that of a statue of Judge Story, which is one of the four statues of great

IDYLLIC HOURS

men placed in the beautiful Chapel of Mt. Auburn cemetery near Boston; and another of the early commissions of Mr. Story was for a statue of George Peabody, who, although a native of Vermont, became a London banker. He is also the sculptor of the statue of Edward Everett, in the Public Garden in Boston. Among his imaginative works, besides the "Cleopatra," are a "Sibyl," "Saul," "Sappho," the "Infant Bacchus," a "Medea," and one work especially fine in its ideal conception — "Jerusalem in Her Desolation," personified by a noble female figure in flowing draperies.

Mr. Story's literary work, although graceful and full of charm, is still the literature of response and assimilation, rather than of strictly original creation; but his "Roba di Roma" and a few of his poems can hardly fail to hold an abiding-place in letters. The "Roba di Roma" seems to be written out of the overflow of artistic impression and suggestion. Mr. Story adopted Landor's favorite form, the dialogue, for the expression of this series of running comment, and the "Roba di Roma" remains a storehouse of no little artistic and literary treasure. It is a book which is little known and less read,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

save among specialists, but it well repays a careful reading, and is worthy of a permanent place in every library. In the little story, "Fiametta," is an airily touched bit of Italian romance, and in "He and She, a Poet's Portfolio," is another dialogue work devoted to literary comment. Although Mr. Story's writings have recognizable claim as reflecting a refined and thoughtful culture, it is in his art as a sculptor and in the variety and choice associations of his social life, that his best expression may be found, and even claim, because of refinement and poetic feeling, a certain immortality, even though the art of sculpture, under the powerful influence of Rodin, has leaped into a new period with new ideals and new standards which have fairly transformed its basis of estimate.

In Mr. Story's prose there is, perhaps, little that will endure ; but among his poems there are two, "Cleopatra" and "Estrangement," which are by way of being remarkable.

The former is one of the most intense, yet subtle, expressions of passionate love to be found, perhaps, in English lyrics ; the latter embodies a feeling that all have experienced — of the unex-

IDYLLIC HOURS

plained and indefinable change that comes sometimes between friends.

"How is it? It seems so strange;
Only a month ago
And we were such friends; now there's a change;
Why, I scarcely know.
It is not that I express
Less, but a little more,
A little more accent, a little more stress,
Which was not needed before."

In his "Roba di Roma" Mr. Story gives a study of Rome whose interest and value must be recognized. The two volumes of "Conversations in a Studio" offer criticism on life and art that is stimulating, suggestive, and fine, containing the later fruits of Mr. Story's ideas and impressions concerning art and literature.

The Storys and the Brownings were much together in Rome. Margaret Fuller and Mrs. Story were on the most intimate terms, and at the time of Miss Fuller's secret marriage to the Marchese d' Ossoli it was to Mrs. Story that she went for counsel and sympathy. Charlotte Cushman, Harriet Hosmer, the Hawthornes, James Jackson Jarves, and many another of the most interesting and famous people were among the circle that the Storys drew about them.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Thackeray was a delighted visitor at Mr. Story's studio and at his home. In 1898 Mr. and Mrs. Story celebrated their golden wedding, and they then looked back over forty-five years of their beautiful art life in the Eternal City. They had three children, — Waldo, a sculptor in Rome; Julian, the painter, who is the husband of Emma Eames, and a daughter, who married the Marchese Peruzzi, of an old Florentine family closely allied with the Medici, and whose home is in Florence, with a summer residence at Vallombrosa, where Mr. Story died in 1895.

Florence offered the choicest scenic setting for all this drama of friendship. To Landor, an enthusiastic lover of pictures; to Browning, who was always deeply interested in the intellectual forces of Tuscany; to Story, with his swift sympathies and versatile culture, all the Florentine background gave color and joy to their social life. The deeper intellectual forces of Italy had their origin in Florence. From the period of the Humanists, on through the radiation of thought from the Platonic Academy, the vast influence of the great libraries established in Florence and the power for culture that was wielded so generously by princely patrons of

IDYLLIC HOURS

learning and art,—from all these mingled conditions arose the intellectual pre-eminence of Florence. The Florentines, like the Athenians, loved their city. That Landor entered deeply into this intense mental life that pervades Florence as an atmosphere is evident from many phases of his work, and perhaps especially so in the “Imaginary Conversation” represented as taking place between Savonarola and the Prior of San Marco. Landor first wrote it in Italian under the title “*Savonarola e il Priori di San Marco*,” and it was originally published (in 1860) in pamphlet form. In all Landor’s literary work nothing more impressively reveals the majesty of his spirit than this work, nor has biography offered any interpretation of Savonarola that so absolutely penetrated into his wonderful inner life as has Landor in this sympathetic divination. “My future is beginning in this piazza,” he makes Savonarola say at the moment of his martyrdom; “I can yet look beyond it. . . . I and my words may pass away, but never will God’s, however now neglected.” The sublimity of that faith, that vision which could discern “a future, beginning from that piazza,” is something unapproached in any other transcription of the

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

execution of Savonarola, whose dream had been to make all art and all learning absolutely consecrated to the glory of the divine life, and who saw, in the life beyond, the life which was to open to him through the flames and the torture, the opportunity to achieve that in which he had failed while on earth.

“No work begun shall ever pause for death.”

To all the glories of art and music Savonarola was infinitely susceptible. On him as Professor Pasquale Villari has said, “Florentine art acted like sacred music, and bore witness to the omnipotence of genius inspired by faith. The paintings of Fra Angelico seemed to have brought down angels from heaven to dwell in the cloisters of San Marco, and he felt as if his soul had been transported to the world of the blessed.”

No one can wander to-day through the consecrated convent of San Marco untouched by the great spirit of the man whose personal presence pervades the very air. The cells, forever glorified with the ineffable beauty of Fra Angelico; the chapel, wherein are entombed Benivieni, Poliziano, and Pico della Mirandola, of the Platonic Academy; the convent garden where

IDYLLIC HOURS

Lorenzo de' Medici was accustomed to walk — all are eloquent of Savonarola.

Of one occasion this anecdote is preserved. "A monk in the interest of Lorenzo went to Savonarola with the message that Lorenzo il Magnifico was walking in the garden. 'Did he ask for me?' asked Savonarola. 'No, Father,' replied the priest. 'Let him then pursue his devotions undisturbed,' tranquilly replied Savonarola." It is, however, in the library of San Marco that one comes peculiarly near the personal presence of Savonarola. Here is the little niche in the wall with a slightly raised dais where he stood when preaching to his brethren, and the room wherein was enacted the last remarkable scene of his life in the convent, thus described by Professor Villari: —

"In the middle of this hall, under the simple vaults of Michelozzi, Savonarola placed the sacrament, collecting his brethren around him, and addressed them in his last and memorable words: 'My sons, in the presence of God, standing before the sacred Host, and with my enemies already in the convent, I now confirm my doctrine. What I have said came to me from God,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

and He is my witness in heaven that what I say is true. I little thought that the whole city would so soon have turned against me ; but God's will be done. My last admonition to you is this : Let your arms be faith, patience, and prayer. I leave you with anguish and pain, to pass into the hands of my enemies. I know not whether they will take my life ; but of this I am certain, that, dead, I shall be able to do far more for you in heaven than, living, I have ever had power to do for you on earth.' ”

Of all places in Florence it is perhaps in San Marco that the visitor lingers longest and to which he turns most often. The library still echoes with the words of Savonarola to the Frati on that night of Palm Sunday, 1498, when he received in writing the promise of the signoria that he, with his companions, should be safely returned. With his friars he sought the library, where he preached eloquently in Latin, exhorting them all to follow God with patience, faith, and prayer. He was ready, he told them, to receive all tribulation with joy for the love of the Lord, knowing that in doing good and suffering evil consisted the Christian life. He concluded

IDYLLIC HOURS

his sermon, and on leaving the library said to his brethren :

“ I will say to you what Jeremiah said : ‘ This thing I expected, but not so soon nor so suddenly.’ ”

Another chronicler of the scene says : —

“ He exhorted them further to live well and to be fervent in prayer. And having confessed to the Father Fra Domenico da Pescia, he took the communion in the first library. And the same did Fra Domenico. After eating a little, he was somewhat refreshed ; and he spoke the last words to his friars, exhorting them to persevere in religion, and kissing them all he took his last departure from them. In the parting, one of his children said to him : ‘ Father, why dost thou abandon us and leave us so desolate ? ’ To which he replied : ‘ Son, have patience ; God will help you ; ’ and he added that he would either see them again alive or that after death he would appear to them without fail. Also, as he departed, he gave up the common keys to the brethren, with so great humility and charity, that the friars could not keep themselves from tears, and many of them wished by all means to go with him. At last recommending himself to their prayers,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

he made his way towards the door of the library, where the first commissioners, all armed, were awaiting him ; to whom, giving himself into their hands like a most meek lamb, he said : ‘ I recommend to you this my flock and all these other citizens.’ And when he was in the corridor of the library he said : ‘ My friars, doubt not, for God will not fail to perfect His work ; and although I be put to death, I shall help you more than I have done in life, and I will return without fail to console you, either dead or alive.’ Arrived at the holy water, which is at the exit of the choir, Fra Domenico said to him : ‘ Fain would I too come to these nuptials.’ Certain of the laymen, his friends, were arrested at the command of the Signoria. When the Father Fra Girolamo was in the first cloister, Fra Benedetto, the miniaturist, strove ardently to go with him ; and when the officers thrust him back he still insisted that he would go. But the Father Fra Girolamo turned to him and said : ‘ Fra Benedetto, on your obedience come not, for I and Fra Domenico have to die for the love of Christ.’ And thus he was torn away from the eyes of his children.”

In San Marco there are several works by Fra Bartolommeo, one being of the Madonna which

IDYLLIC HOURS

is very beautiful. This painter had been deeply impressed by the sermons of Savonarola and had felt that he was called to the religious life as a vocation. For some time he lived in monastic retreat at Prato, and finally, being removed to San Marco, he again turned to his art, resolving to use it only for devotional subjects. A portrait of Savonarola which he painted is a wonderful interpretation of the very spirit of the great martyr.

In the two cells that were occupied by Savonarola one feels very close to that life that was lived there four hundred years ago. His desk, his chair, his rosary, and a copy of his sermons; a most interesting old picture which belonged to the Buondelmonti family showing the tragic scene of the execution of Savonarola on May 28, 1498, all absorb the visitor. It was his personal devotion to St. Thomas Aquinas that led Savonarola to choose the Dominican order of monks, and it was only eight years before his death that he had been chosen Prior of San Marco. The church in the monastery could not begin to hold the crowds that thronged to listen to him, and he obtained leave to preach in the Duomo. "In order to participate in the benefits

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

of the spiritual food he dispensed," says a writer, "the inhabitants of the town and neighboring villages deserted their abodes, and the rude mountaineers descended from the Apennines and directed their steps towards Florence, where crowds of pilgrims flocked every morning at break of day, when the gates were opened, and became the objects of a charity truly fraternal, the citizens vying with one another in the exercise of the duties of Christian hospitality, embracing them in the streets as brothers, even before they were acquainted with their names, while some of the more pious received them by forty at a time into their houses."

There were rich and beautiful mornings passed by one and another of this group of choice spirits in the Uffizi or the Pitti galleries. The Palazzo Pitti always suggests to the thoughtful visitor the curious workings of destiny. When Luca Pitti gave to Brunelleschi the order to design him a palace so vast that "the doors of the Palazzo Medici should serve as models for the windows" he little dreamed that his hated rivals would come into possession of the magnificent architectural creation which was built to crush their pride and outdo their splendor. Luca

IDYLLIC HOURS

Pitti had served Florence as Prior, Gonfalonier, and as Ambassador to Rome ; he was the rival of the Medici and the Strozzi, whose ambitions he planned to undermine ; but his projects ended, instead, in his own defeat and ruin. The treachery he planned against the Medici returned against himself, and although warned by Niccolo Soderini, he was unable to avert the consequences of his plot against the Medicean dynasty. It was in 1440 that Brunelleschi received this commission, which he only lived to carry out to the second story, leaving the completion of the palace to other hands. In 1549 it was purchased by the Duchessa Eleonora di Toledo, the wife of Cosimo I, and in the spring of the following year they took possession of it, and thus the palace passed into the possession of the Medici. Some idea of the immensity of the Pitti Palace can be gained from its proportions, each window being twenty-four feet wide and each of the three stories forty feet in height. It is an impressive rather than beautiful palace, looking more like a vast fortress. George Eliot said that this palace was a wonderful union of Cyclopean grandeur and massive regularity.

The Court of the palace has statues and a foun-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

tain, and from this one passes into the Silver Chamber (*camera degli Argenti*) in which the royal plate is kept which includes a service of lapis-lazuli, and work by Benvenuto Cellini and Pollajuolo.

The private apartments of the king comprise a study, in which are two beautiful cabinets in mosaic and bronze which belonged to the Medici, a sleeping-room, with canopied bed, and a toilet chamber with innumerable mirrors. The Queen's private apartments have a boudoir, whose walls are covered with pale rose satin, embroidered, and the chairs and sofa upholstered in the same. Here, too, is one of those exquisite cabinets in which Cosimo and his Eleonora seem to have so lavishly indulged. In the sleeping-room the bed is canopied in dark green brocade, and at the head is a *prie dieu* with a font holding holy water, over which hangs a crucifix. There is a writing-table of rare beauty, and in the *sala di toilette*, opening from this room, are wonderful triplicate mirrors, magnificent wardrobes, and a dressing-table furnished with articles in gold and pearl. The royal apartments contain a few pictures of note, — a "Madonna of the Roses" by Botticelli, and also a Madonna by Carlo Dolci.

IDYLLIC HOURS

The great canvas of "Pallas and the Centaur" by Botticelli (often referred to as "An Allegory") is placed in these apartments, and it is considered one of the most interesting of his works. The figure of Pallas is instinct with vitality ; and the ethereal draperies, fluttering as she glides forward clutching the hair of the Centaur, suggest the very poetry of motion. The intense blue of the sky and the glimpse of shore in the background contribute to the exquisite pictorial effect.

The pictures in the Pitti gallery number some five hundred only, but in quality they form the richest and most important gallery in the world. These works are almost exclusively great masterpieces. The gallery comprises sixteen rooms, known as the Sala dell' Iliade, the Sala di Giove, and the Salas of Apollo, Venus, Mars, Ulysses, Prometheus, and others, not to forget the Sala della Stufa (Salon of the Stove), for a stove in Italy is fairly entitled to rank as an important and interesting curio, if not as a treasure of art ! Here one wanders on and finds the wonderful "Vision of Ezekiel," in which the prophet, gazing into the heavens, sees the Heavenly Father in all the glory of splendor, leaning from the clouds with angels and seraphs ; Fra Bartolommeo's

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

"*Ecce Homo*;" the Madonna of Filippo Lippo; Raphael's "*La Donna Velata*;" the "*Warrior*" of Salvator Rosa, and two of his enchanting landscapes; Perugino's "*Adoration*," with its infinite sweetness; and the "*Assumption*" of Andrea del Sarto.

Guido Reni's "*Cleopatra*" is a vivid, brilliant work, showing the Egyptian queen in the splendor of her beauty — the bust uncovered and the asp at her breast. The expression of the face is a study. One of the greatest works here is Giorgione's "*Concert*," in which the very genius of music is painted. The monk has his hands on the clavichord; his head is turned away, and one feels that he is hearing harmonies not of this world. The very genius of music shines from the beautiful, impassioned face. Here, too, one finds the famous "*Marriage of St. Catherine*," by Titian, Andrea del Sarto's "*Dispute About the Trinity*," Raphael's "*Madonna della Seggiola*," in which the Mother sits in a low chair holding the Child, while St. John folds his tiny hands in prayer; the coloring is exceptionally pure and strong; Salvator Rosa's "*Conspiracy of Catiline*," Raphael's "*Holy Family*," Murillo's Madonna, Raphael's portrait of Julius II, Per-

IDYLLIC HOURS

ugino's "Magdalen," Albert Dürer's "Adam and Eve," — two life-sized portraits, Eve represented as with golden hair, — and Da Vinci's portrait of Ginevra. These are but a few of the rich works that leave their very impress upon life. The well-known picture of "The Three Fates," usually attributed to Michael Angelo, is a very striking work. Connoisseurs differ in their opinions as to the artist, some good authorities inclining to believe it the work of Fiorentino. The "Assumption of the Virgin," by Andrea del Sarto, is one of the noblest works in the entire world of art. In the luminous atmosphere the Virgin is seen, seated on the clouds, gazing upward with a celestial expression. Of Andrea del Sarto's works Swinburne has written: "At Florence only can one trace and tell how great a painter, and how various, Andrea was. There, only, but surely there, can the spirit and presence of the things of time on his immortal spirit be understood." The "Annunciation" by this artist, which is in the Pitti, is one of the most poetic conceptions given by any artist of that sublime event. Mary is represented as having just risen from prayer when the angel appears bowing on one knee, and the instantaneous and sublime im-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

pression made upon the Virgin is felt in every line and gesture. The "Holy Family" and the figure of St. John as a boy, by Andrea del Sarto, are in these galleries, with other works of this artist. No more beautiful example of coloring combined with wonderful expressiveness of the figures can be found in any work of Titian's than in his "Marriage of St. Catherine," and the light on the picture recalls to the gazer Longfellow's lines regarding this artist: —

" You have caught
These golden hues from your Venetian sunsets.
The uttermost that can be reached by color
Is here accomplished."

Titian's "La Bella" represents a young and beautiful woman with a delicate, proud patrician face; the luxuriant hair coiled in braids; the three-fourths-length figure is portrayed standing, costumed in rich brocade, décolleté, with long puffed sleeves. It is without doubt a portrait of the Duchessa Eleonora, the wife of Cosimo I, as the face is the same as that of her authorized portrait by Titian which is in the Uffizi. The belief that the Duchessa is the original of this picture has been questioned, but it is now

IDYLLIC HOURS

generally accepted on the evidence of the portrait.

Raphael can be studied to great advantage in the Pitti, although the devotee of his art will find an earthly paradise in the Raphael stanza in the Vatican. In the Pitti is not only the "Madonna della Seggiola" already mentioned, but the "Madonna della Granduca," showing the halo around the heads of the Mother and the Holy Child, — a picture of the utmost reverence and stately simplicity; and beside these is the "Madonna del Baldacchino," revealing the Virgin and the Child seated under a canopy with angels near. These Madonnas, with their celestial loveliness and human tenderness and charm, recall to one anew the words of John Addington Symonds when he says: "What distinguishes the whole work of Raphael is its humanity in the double sense of the humane and the human. . . . Even sadness, tragedy, and death take loveliness with him."

One of the most fascinating of Raphael's works is "La Donna Velata," a portrait which has nothing in common with his Madonnas, but is full of fine detail and subtle feeling. The "San Marco" of Fra Bartolommeo is a work of great force; the portrait of "Rubens" by himself, and

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

his landscape, "Ulysses on the Islands of the Phœnicians," are most interesting. Salvator Rosa's "Harbor at Sunset" is a picture with such a glory of coloring that no words can convey any adequate idea of its beauty. One work by Carlo Dolci, "St. Andrew Praying before his Execution," must have a word of itself. The sweetness and beauty of the expression in the face makes this work almost greater than his famous Madonna. One fascinating composition (attributed to Bonifazio Veronese) is "The Sybil Explaining to Augustus the Mystery of the Incarnation."

All these halls of the Pitti gallery are beautiful in themselves, in the rich decorations of the ceiling, the inlaid floors, and the sumptuous tables of mosaic and bronze and colored marbles, and the magnificent vases with which they are decorated.

The views from the windows of the Palazzo Pitti are superb. On one side are seen the heights of Bellosguardo, crowned with white stone villas, and the mediæval tower; another looks towards Fiesole, and the view to the east over the city is one of the most striking in all Europe, taking in the Duomo, the strange mediæval tower of Civita Vecchio, the dome of San Spirito, and the

IDYLLIC HOURS

bell tower of San Lorenzo, which contains the bell given by Anna Maria de' Medici, the sister of the last Grand Duke of this historic family, and which was erected as late as 1740.

The Uffizi gallery is notable for its long corridors of sculpture, for many fine works, and for the special representations of different schools, the French, Flemish, Venetian, Italian, and Dutch, and for the gallery of the portraits of living artists painted by themselves, which, beginning with Michael Angelo, Da Vinci, Raphael, and others of their time, extends to contemporary artists, as Sir John Millais, Alma Tadema, Puvis de Chavannes, Bonnat, Henner, and George Frederick Watts.

The Church of San Lorenzo had a peculiar attraction for the group of friends who loved to wander about Florence. "The general effect is very sombre," Hawthorne records, "and the shrines, the monuments, and the statues look dingy with time and neglect." The interior is, indeed, dark and forbidding, but the very gloom has its fascination.

One's first impression is a sense of vacant space, and in imagination one hears, even across the gulf of five hundred years, the impassioned eloquence

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

of Savonarola, who, from this very pulpit that we now see, fearlessly launched his denunciations at the Medici family, the immediate patrons of the church itself. Just before May 9, 1498, when he was put to death in the Piazza Signoria, he preached one of his most thrilling sermons in San Lorenzo, whose accents almost seem to echo there to-day. The vast space is in the form of a Latin cross. Corinthian columns divide the nave from the aisles. There is a beautiful singing gallery, inlaid with white and colored marbles and crystal. There are sculptures and paintings representing Donatello, Dupré, Rossellini, Verrocchio, Perugino, and here in the Medici chapel is the great masterpiece of Filippo Lippi, an Annunciation. Very recently — indeed, in 1896 — a monument to Donatello, the work of Raffaello Romanelli, was placed in this chapel. In connection with this church of San Lorenzo is the Lorentian library, which was initiated by Cosimo il Vecchio, the son of Giovanni di Bicci, the rich and powerful noble to whom Florence owes so much. It is a curious fact, that, although the populace grumbled regarding the tyranny of the Medici family, they yet became so accustomed to the yoke as to miss it when it

IDYLLIC HOURS

fell off, and to demand its return. In the fifteenth century Cosimo and his brother Lorenzo (Il Magnifico) were exiled to Padua, but the people became discontented and tumultuous, and the Medici were recalled, to return with triumphs and rejoicings, and, indeed, the period of their greatest power came after this. There were two Cosimos in the Medici family — the elder called "Il Vecchio," to distinguish him from the Grand Duke of the same name. Cosimo il Vecchio died in 1469, and his son Piero succeeded. As before noted, it was he who married Mona Lucrezia Tornabuoni.

He became the head of the republic when but fifteen years of age and his reign was a remarkable one. His was a great nature, enthusiastic, liberal, and generous. He was the patron of arts and science, and the restorer and promoter of Florentine magnificence. Under his leadership Florence acquired that prestige which she has never entirely lost as the artistic and intellectual metropolis of Italy. It may not be generally remembered that Pope Clement VII was a Medici. Lorenzo il Magnifico had a brother, Giuliano, who was murdered by Bernardo Bandini, of the conspiracy of the Pazzi. He had

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

never married, but he left a son. The Magnificent recognized this nameless nephew, educated him, and he became a cardinal under Leo X, and afterward the Pope known as Clement VII. The reign of Lorenzo was no less glorious in defeat than in triumph. Pope Sixtus IV and Ferdinand, King of Naples, hated the Medici, and brought war against Florence. Disaster followed disaster, and Lorenzo voluntarily went to Naples to put himself in the hands of Ferdinand. But the King of Naples, too, was not without his magnanimity, and the personal meeting of the two men was the initiation of a warm friendship between them, and there ensued a peace that gave many glorious years to Florence. Lorenzo the Magnificent died in Carreggi in 1492, the same year in which America was discovered. He had married Clarice Orsini, and of this marriage there were seven children, of whom one of the daughters, Maria, was the love of Michael Angelo. The eldest son, Pietro, succeeded to the government of Florence, but he lacked his father's noble qualities. He was arrogant and selfish, and wished to reign independent of the Signoria, who are the Parliament of Florence. Pietro placed Pisa and Leghorn

IDYLLIC HOURS

in the hands of Charles VIII, of France, and this so incensed the Florentines, who were urged on also by the fiery eloquence of Savonarola, that they banished the Medici from Florence again, robbed their houses, and captured all the rich treasures that had been collected by Lorenzo il Magnifico. He died in exile in 1504, and left a son, named Lorenzo, and a daughter, Clarice, who married Filippo Strozzi: whose name is now given to the new viale skirting a park in the more modern part of the city.

Florence in her own way is as distinctive as Rome. The contrast is great. The archæological interest is in Rome, but in the purely artistic Florence is far the richer, and especially in sculpture. Any hour in the day one may stroll into church or gallery and see masterpieces that hold their own through all the ages. No city has a more vividly defined centre and point of departure for sight-seeing than has Florence in the Duomo. The marvellous monument of the genius of Brunelleschi dominates the entire city. From it everything else is relative. Like Rome and Paris, Florence is divided by her river, — the turbid, muddy Arno; and while the principal centre of business is on one side, the

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

two are almost equal in point of historic and social importance. The square around the Duomo, called the Piazza del Duomo, is the centre of various streets, one of which leads directly to the Piazza della Signoria, on which the Palazzo Vecchio and the Loggia de' Lanza, filled with great groups of sculpture, are located.

From this piazza are the entrances to the grand council chamber of the Vecchio, where stands the colossal statue of Savonarola, and from which open the rooms of the Medici family, filled with their treasures. Here, too, is the entrance to the Uffizi gallery, and a little street near runs down to Santa Croce, in which are the tombs of Michael Angelo, Alfieri, a monument to Dante, and other wonderful groups. Just beyond the Palazzo Vecchio lies the famous Ponte Vecchio, over the Arno, — the bridge lined with the shops of jewellers and vendors of bric-a-brac. Along the bank of the river is the well-known drive and promenade called the Lung' Arno, with shops and hotels facing the river, and the spires and towers of the city on the opposite side; and the background of hills crowned with villas offers one of the most picturesque views in the world. The dome of San Spirito is defined against a



SAVONAROLA.

From the Statue by Pazzi in the Palazzo Vecchio.

1900

IDYLLIC HOURS

golden background in the late afternoon, and following this promenade one comes to the Cascine, which is to Florence what the Pincian hill is to Rome. Florence is so rich in art that one knows not where to begin in speaking of its treasures. One of the most interesting churches is that of Sante Croce, and it is one of the first to which the tourist turns his steps. It dates from the year 1297, and was commenced by the monks of St. Francis, who were under the special protection of Pope Gregory IX. Giotto became master of the work in 1334, but the façade is modern, and was completed as late as 1868. Over the grand entrance is a bas-relief representing the Elevation of the Cross, by Giovanni Dupré, of Siena, who is also the sculptor of a fine statue of the Madonna Addolorata. There is an hour in this church in the late afternoon, when the sunset lights touch paintings and sculptures with the gleams of gold, that is one to be remembered.

Sante Croce is the Florentine Pantheon. It was here that the most impressive and magnetic preacher of his day, Fra Francesco da Montepulciano, held his audiences under a spell half of terror, half of love, and where in response to

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

his vivid painting of the horrors that followed those who did not repent, they all cried out: "Misericordia." A larger number of the ancient Florentine families are entombed here than in any other one church. The inscriptions form almost a history of Florence, for there is hardly an important family whose name is not found here. The church is lined with monuments to the greatest Italians. Here is Donatello's statue of St. Louis, Bishop of Toulouse. San Bernardino of Siena has a tablet here. Vasari's monument to Michael Angelo is a grand conception. As will be remembered, Michael Angelo died in Rome (in 1565) at the age of ninety, and Cosimo I had the body secretly brought to Florence. The funeral ceremonies took place in the church of San Lorenzo, and the oration was pronounced by Benedetto Varchi, the historian and poet. It is said that every artist in Florence contributed to the decoration of the church on this occasion, and a high mass in solemn music was rendered before the body was entombed in Santa Croce. Although the ashes of Dante rest in Ravenna, the monument to him by Ricci, placed in the piazza of Santa Croce, is one of the important modern works in Florence.

IDYLLIC HOURS

A bronze tablet in Santa Croce commemorates Garibaldi, and another is placed to the memory of the great patriot Mazzini. The Duchess of Albany placed in this church the monumental tomb of Alfieri, and an imposing monument is that erected to the memory of Machiavelli.

In no city has history and art been more closely interwoven than in Florence. In fact, Florentine art is simply consecrated by the sacrifice, the nobility, the loftiness of purpose out of which it springs, and the glory of its heroic age still lingers. We have all been more or less accustomed to hearing of the crimes and iniquities of the Medici; but the record of this family of Florentine nobles comprises some of the most generous and uplifting passages in history.

One of the most charming drives around Florence is to the Certosa — the old convent that crowns the summit of a hill whose slopes are all in a glimmer of silver-green olive trees, interspersed with the tall, dark cypresses. The Certosa dates back to 1341, when Niccolo Acciajuolo induced the republic to grant its fortifications. There are now only a few monks in residence, and their occupation is less that of

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

devotion than of the manufacture of chartreuse which they sell to the visitors. The cloister is very attractive with its Luca della Robbias, and the church is rich in frescoes and marbles. The high altar is over a crypt, in which are the tombs of the founder of his family. Perkins, in his "Tuscan Sculptors," says: —

"Whether Andrea Orcagna built the Certosa near Florence is uncertain; but the monuments of its founder, Niccolò Acciajuolo, and his family, which exist in the subterranean church, belong to his time, and were perhaps executed by some of his scholars. The tomb of Niccolò (Grand Seneschal of the kingdom of Naples under Queen Joanna I, ob. 1366) consists of his recumbent statue, clad in armor placed high against the wall, beneath a rich gothic canopy. His son, Lorenzo, upon whose funeral obsequies he spent more than fifty thousand gold florins, lies below under a marble slab, upon which is sculptured the effigy of this youth of a most lovely countenance, cavalier and great baron, tried in arms, and eminent for his graceful manners and his gracious and noble aspect. Next him lie his grandfather and his sister Lapa. The general design of

IDYLLIC HOURS

Niccolò's tomb is very peculiar, gothic certainly, but almost transitional to the cinquecento. Niccolò, the Grand Seneschal, founder of the convent, was a noble character. The family, originally from Brescia, and named after the trade they rose by, attained sovereignty in the person of Ranier, nephew of the Seneschal, styled Duke of Athens and Lord of Thebes and Argos and Sparta. He was succeeded by his bastard son Antony, and the latter by two nephews, whom he invited from Florence, Ranion and Antony Acciajuolo; the son of the latter, Francesco, finally yielded Athens to Mahomet II in 1456, and was soon afterwards strangled by his orders at Thebes."

The tomb of Bishop Angelo Acciajuolo, by Donatello, is also very striking. Of the recumbent figure of the Bishop of Cortona, also in this crypt, Mr. Perkins says:—

"It is very carefully modelled: the flesh parts are well treated, and the drapery is disposed in natural folds. It has almost the effect of a corpse laid out for burial before the altar, and produces a striking effect."

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Passing on to the foot of Bellosguardo, one comes to the ancient Church of San Francesco di Paola, where the bishop of Fiesole lies, of whose tomb Mr. Perkins says:—

“The admirably truthful figure of the dead bishop, clad in his episcopal robes, is laid upon a sarcophagus within a square recess, whose architrave and side posts are decorated with enamelled tiles, painted with flowers and fruits colored after nature. At the back of the recess, filling up the space above the sarcophagus, are three half-figures, of Christ, the Madonna, and St. John; all the faces are expressive, and that of the Saviour is especially fine and full of mournful dignity. Around the top of the sarcophagus runs a rich cornice, below which are sculptured two flying angels, bearing between them a garland containing an inscription setting forth the name and titles of the deceased.”

The panoramic beauty of all this region is the more exquisite because of the rich color scheme. The amethyst mountains change to rose, to purple, to gray, to green, the delicate shades blending into each other and deepening, fading, paling,

IDYLLIC HOURS

receding as one watches them. It was from this Bellosguardo region that Hawthorne wrote : —

“ The Umbrian Valley opens before us, set in its grand framework of nearer and more distant hills. It seems as if all Italy lay under our eyes in this one picture. For there is the broad, sunny smile of God, which we fancy to be spread over this favored land more abundantly than on other regions, and beneath it glows a most rich and varied fertility. The trim vineyards are there, and the fig trees, and the mulberries, and the smoky-hued tracts of the olive orchards ; there, too, are fields of every kind of grain, among which waves the Indian corn. White villas, gray convents, church spires, villages, towns, each with its battlemented walls and towered gateway, are scattered upon this spacious map ; a river gleams across it ; and the lakes open their blue eyes in its face, reflecting heaven, lest mortals should forget that better land when they behold the earth so beautiful.”

All these drives and the old cloisters and niches were endeared to the Storys by almost daily familiarity, and Mr. Browning frequently accompanied

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

them, although Mrs. Browning's health made excursions seldom possible for her. Landor, too, was one of the most ardent habitués of churches and galleries. His mania — for it was hardly less — for collecting old paintings was one of his marked characteristics, as was his lack of discrimination between the genuine and poor imitations. During one of his last drives around Florence, narrates Kate Field, "he stopped the horses at the corner of a dirty little old street, and, getting out of the carriage, hurriedly disappeared round a corner, leaving us without explanation and consequently in amazement. We had not long to wait, however, as he soon appeared carrying a large roll of canvas. 'There!' he exclaimed, as he again seated himself, 'I've made a capital bargain. I've long wanted these paintings, but the man asked more than I could give. To-day he relented. They are very clever, and I shall have them framed.' Alas! they were not clever, and Landor, in his last days, had queer notions concerning art. That he was excessively fond of pictures is undoubtedly true; he surrounded himself with them, but there was far more quantity than quality about them. He frequently attributed very bad paintings to very

IDYLLIC HOURS

good masters ; and it by no means followed because he called a battle-piece a ' Salvator Rosa,' that it was painted by Salvator. But the old man was tenacious of his art opinions, and it was unwise to argue the point." Mr. Browning always endeavored to exert a restraining influence over Landor's too indiscriminate purchases, which often proved to be a small fortune to unscrupulous dealers.

Mrs. Browning's first acquaintance with Landor began in England, some years before her marriage, and of this first meeting with Landor and Wordsworth (in 1836), she wrote: " At the same time I saw Landor — the brilliant Landor ! and felt the difference between great genius and eminent talent." That she had stood face to face with these two poets ; that she had met " Landor, in whose words the ashes of antiquity burn again," was an event to her, and neither would have dreamed how this meeting initiated a lifelong friendship destined to hold peculiar experiences. Landor was full of life and impassioned energy. He had been one of the great group to first recognize Robert Browning's genius on the appearance of " Paracelsus," — a group which included Leigh Hunt, Barry Corn-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

wall, Dickens, and Wordsworth. It was not, however, until after the marriage of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning, and their establishment in Casa Guidi in Florence, that Landor came to know them intimately, and the appreciation gradually grew, on the part of the Brownings, to tender solicitude and the final care of Landor in his latest years. When "Luria" had appeared (in 1866), Browning dedicated it to Landor in these words: "I dedicate this last attempt for the present at dramatic poetry, to a great dramatic poet, 'wishing what I write may be read by his light,' if a phrase originally addressed, by not the least worthy of his contemporaries, to Shakespeare, may be applied here by one whose sole privilege is in a grateful admiration to Walter Savage Landor." Of Browning Landor had said:—

"He has sent me some admirable things. I only wish he would atticize a little. Few of the Athenians had such a quarry on their property, but they constructed better roads for the conveyance of the material."

Still later Landor had written, in a letter to Southey:—

IDYLLIC HOURS

“I have written to Browning; a great poet a very great poet, indeed, as the world will have to agree with us in thinking. I am now deep in the *Soul's Tragedy*. The sudden close of *Luria* is very grand; but preceding it I fear there is rather too much of argumentation and reflection. It is continued too long after the Moor has taken the poison. I may be wrong; but if it is so, you will see it and tell him. God grant he may live to be much greater than he is, high as he stands above most of the living: *latis humeris et toto vertice*. But now to the *Soul's Tragedy*, and so adieu till we meet at this very table.”

The foundation of the friendship which was to prove to be to Landor the blessing of his last years was thus laid in intellectual appreciation and mutual esteem. “It requires a god to recognize a god,” runs an old proverb. In this case the recognition was mutual and generous. Landor's admiration for Mrs. Browning was infinitely deepened and extended when “*Aurora Leigh*” appeared. “I am reading a poem,” he wrote of it, “full of thought and fascinating with fancy. — Mrs. Browning's *Aurora Leigh*. In many

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

pages there is the wild imagination of Shakespeare. I had no idea that any one in this age was capable of so much poetry. I am half drunk with it. Never did I think I should have a good hearty draught of poetry again: the distemper had got into the vineyard that produced it. Here are indeed, even here, some flies upon the surface, as there always will be upon what is sweet and strong. I know not yet what the story is. Few possess the power of construction."

Although the Storys made occasional visits to Florence, and had passed several summers in Siena, they did not come to know Landor well until the very close of his life. Mr. and Mrs. Story had once paid him a brief visit in England, introduced to him by Mr. Kenyon, and of this Mrs. Story records that he was extremely cordial and kind and induced them to pass some time with him. "He had his walls lined with paintings, of no great value, I believe," she adds, "but bearing high-sounding names of the Italian schools."

The friendship between the Brownings and the Storys was, on the part of the latter, at least, the most interesting of their lives. Mr. Henry James narrates with what eager response Mr. Story

IDYLLIC HOURS

visited every day the Pitti gallery, at the time of his first sojourn in Florence, when he and Browning met, and how Mr. Story abounded "in descriptions of pictures, statues, museums, churches, and in enthusiasms, opinions, and disappointments." All this artistic tumult fascinated Browning's imagination. During one of the early sojourns of the Storys in Florence came Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Pearse Cranch of Cambridge, Massachusetts, and they all "sat over the fire and told stories." Mr. Cranch was one of those versatile and delicately gifted New Englanders—a poet, painter, musician, who, like Jones Very and Dr. Parsons, must be closely and, indeed, reverently approached to be in any adequate sense appreciated. He was a man of exquisite divination, as revealed for instance in a stanza of his:—

"We are spirits clad in veils:
Man by man was never seen;
All our deep communion fails
To remove the shadowy screen."

Together Browning and Story made excursions to the old Badia, which contains that beautiful tomb by Mino da Fiesole; the quaint and massive Bargello, formerly the Palace of the Podestà,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

whose picturesque court, with its grand staircase by Goddi impressed them, it may well be believed, in the same profound manner that is felt by the artistically inclined tourist of to-day. The fine upper loggia, the design of Orcagna, is his best monument, and the tragic cell for the condemned — rarely vacant in his day — still gives a shiver to the sensitive observer. The Arms of the Duke of Athens and those of more than two hundred Podestàs, are a rich and effective feature of the court. The upper salons which were formerly the apartments of the Podestà contain many notable objects: Donatello's "David," standing with his foot on the head of Goliath; the wonderful "Dancing Mercury" of Giovanni da Bologna, with its airy, floating lightness; a gruesome reliquary; and countless old bronzes, frescoes, and curios.

To what extent Santa Croce impressed the poet and the sculptor, there is no record. Mrs. Browning seems always to have been fascinated by Santa Maria Novella, with its famous Cimabue, and the strange old green cloister. Santa Croce is the Westminster Abbey of Florence; and the tombs of Michael Angelo, of Machiavelli, of Alfieri, the frescoes of Giotto in the Capella



MERCURY.

From the Bronze of Giovanni da Bologna.

1770

IDYLLIC HOURS

Peruzzi — the finest series that he ever produced — allure one to linger away many a morning until the old sacristan relentlessly closes its doors. The Storys spend “long, quiet evenings with the Brownings at Casa Guidi,” and Mrs. Story and Mrs. Browning read and discuss “Jane Eyre” together. “Plainly ‘Jane Eyre’ is by a woman,” said Mrs. Browning. At the festival of Corpus Domini the Storys and the Brownings together watch the motley procession that fills the streets between the Palazzo Vecchio and the piazza of Santa Maria Novella, where the *compagnie* of the churches, costumed in white, with curls on their heads and with black draperies, march with their banners; the nobility, richly clad with scarlet capes, follow, and the Host is borne, under a sumptuous canopy, into the church, the soldiers all kneeling in the piazza as it passes. All the nameless fascination of foreign customs charmed the eye and furnished that scenic background which made so picturesque the friendship between the Storys and the Brownings. Mr. Story writes from Rome to James Russell Lowell, after one of their returns from Florence, that Browning has “great vivacity . . . and very great frankness and friendliness of manner and

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

mind." There was an idyllic summer at Bagni di Lucca, when, high up in the chestnut-wooded hills, the Brownings and the Storys passed idle days together; taking evening drives along the rushing little Serchio where Shelley used to row his boat, and "falling asleep whenever the wind blew coolly through the windows." Both Mr. and Mrs. Browning were deeply absorbed in work that summer,—she engaged on "*Aurora Leigh*," and he busy in collecting and revising his lyric poems for publication. This Arcadian life was full of brightness. There is a picnic to Porto Fiorito,—the revelries being conducted by the Brownings, the Storys, and Mr. Lytton, who, Secretary of the Legation in Florence, escapes for a day in the woods. They "passed over wild and grand scenery" and found an old church "from which the view was magnificent,—with deep patches of purple shade and little grey towns perched here and there." And on another day they dined together "on a smooth grassy table under the trees and rocks." And Mr. Story records:¹ "The whole day in the woods with the Brownings. We went at ten o'clock,

¹ "*William Wetmore Story; And His Friends.*" By kind permission of Messrs. Houghton, Mifflin & Co.

IDYLLIC HOURS

carrying our provisions. Browning and I walked to the spot, and there, spreading shawls under the great chestnuts, we read and talked the livelong day, the Lima, at our feet, babbling on over the stones." . . . So the gods talked, apparently

" in the breath of the woods ; "

and we have Emerson's word for it that

" the poet who overhears
Some random word they say
Is the fated man of men
Whom the ages must obey. "

When the Storys were not in Florence there were always possibilities that the Brownings might be in Rome, — their journey thither, on one trip, extending over eight days, during which they visited Assisi, and its great monastery and triple church. They arrived in Rome to find that the Storys had taken an apartment for them, and to find "lighted lamps and fires, and smiling faces that evening." Later there came the Siena summers when the Storys and the Brownings made their *villeggiatura* in the strange mediæval hill-town, one summer of which Landor was with them as the guest of the Storys. These lovely chapters of life ran on from year to year until,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

in the last June days of 1861, Elizabeth Browning entered on that life more abundant ; and more than a quarter of a century later, in the December of 1889, came to Robert Browning the beautiful realization of his immortal lines : —

“O thou soul of my soul ! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest !”

*Ah what avails the sceptred race,
Ah what the form divine !
What every virtue, every grace !
Rose Aylmer, all were thine.
Rose Aylmer, whom these wakeful eyes
May weep, but never see,
A night of memories and of sighs
I consecrate to thee.*

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

*Come lovely and soothing death,
Undulate round the world, serenely arriving, arriving,
In the day, in the night, to all, to each,
Sooner or later delicate death.*

*The night, in silence under many a star,
And the soul turning to thee O vast and well-veil'd death.
I bring thee a song that when thou must indeed come, come
unflatteringly.*

WALT WHITMAN.

*The lingering charm of a dream that has fled,
The rose's breath when the rose is dead,
The echo that lives when the song is done,
The sunset glories that follow the sun, —
Everything tender and everything fair
That was, and is not, and yet is there — . . .*

LOUISE CHANDLER MOULTON.

V

THE DREAM OF ROSE AYLMER

"The lilies die with the dying hours !
Hushed is the song-birds' lay,
But I dream of summers and dream of flowers
That last alway."

A vision, just revealed and then withdrawn ; a dream that fled in the moment of waking ; a voice whose echo alone thrilled the air : —

" . . . one blue deep hour
Of lilies musical with busy bliss, — "

and then withdrawn into the unseen world to make Paradise more fair, — something of this was the dream of Rose Aylmer in the life of Walter Savage Landor, — a girl of seventeen with whom he wandered among garden roses and in shady lanes one summer in his earliest youth ; a girl who lent him a romance from whose pages he derived his idea of the poem of "Gebir ;" and then their paths divided, — hers turning to India, where at the age of twenty she died, and his into the busy and absorbing experiences of life and literature, from whence, only

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

at the age of nearly ninety years, was he released to go on into that far, fair country we shall all one day see. Yet, that this momentary vision of Rose Aylmer, in all her youth and grace and loveliness, left on Landor the most intense and permanent impress of all the experiences of his ninety years of life, can be doubted only by those who fail to understand that intense and eternal reality of an impress made on the imagination. It is the lightning-flash that leaves its mark ; the experience of one instant that stamps a lifetime.

“ His instant thought a poet spoke
And filled the age his fame.
An inch of ground the lightning struck
But lit the sky with flame.”

The poetry of a lifetime may be condensed into one brief summer's hour, but that hour will hold an influence far outweighing that of all the years. These are the moments that stamp their impress indelibly on life ; that control and determine its entire course and destiny. No one can ever go back of such experiences and be the same as before.

“ Not wholly can the heart unlearn
The lesson of its better hours,
Nor yet has Time's dull footstep worn
To common dust that path of flowers.”

THE DREAM OF ROSE AYLMER

Like a strain of ethereal music running as a *motif* through a great symphony, so the dream of Rose Aylmer ran through all Landor's long and varied experiences, only occasionally recurring to outward recognition, but holding its subtle coloring and control of his inner life. There are glimpses of things too beautiful for earthly realization that sometimes flash upon the vision; through space and silence soul calls to soul, and all the fairy bells ring out in ethereal melody; recognitions come as pledge and prophecy alone, and are withdrawn to flower into perfect realization in the life beyond. Yet within the cloud the glory lives undimmed, nor can any outer experience in life compare, in intensity and in ineffaceable impression, with these. Never can these experiences be banished from memory and imagination.

"We cross an unseen line
And lo! another zone."

It is that which eludes the grasp, that which can never be defined, that thrills the soul with its immortal loveliness.

"The rose we gathered not
Lives in our hearts forever."

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

It is the voice that "from inmost dreamland calls" which echoes down the pathway of a lifetime. In the beautiful words of Florence Earle Coates, —

"Something I may not win attracts me ever, —
Something elusive, yet supremely fair,
Thrills me with gladness, but contents me never,
Fills me with sadness, yet forbids despair.

"It blossoms just beyond the paths I follow,
It shines beyond the farthest stars I see,
It echoes faint from ocean caverns hollow,
And from the land of dreams it beckons me.

"It calls, and all my best, with joyful feeling,
Essays to reach it as I make reply:
I feel its sweetness o'er my spirit stealing
Yet know ere I attain it, I must die!"

The finer fruitions of life are like the seed that is not quickened unless it dies.

"The choicest fruitage comes not with the spring;
But still for summer's mellowing touch must wait,
For storms and tears which seasoned excellence bring."

The life in this world

 ". . . is not conclusion;
 A sequel lies beyond."

The more significant and the more real experiences await their fruition in the life which is to

THE DREAM OF ROSE AYLMER

come. "Love comes not by obeyed commands, but by fulfilled conditions." Between Walter Savage Landor and Rose Aylmer the conditions were not then fulfilled. It was a poetic rather than an emotional dream that Rose Aylmer inspired in the poet; yet there can hardly be a question as to the unconscious influence that her memory exercised over his life, — an influence of exquisite delicacy and exaltation. The charm of the little lyric which bears Rose Aylmer's name as its title is something that eludes all analysis and enchains every heart. "The deep and tender pathos of that little poem could hardly be surpassed," says John Forster, and in delicacy and sweetness it is perfect. It was first printed in its present form some years after it was written, — and has since affected many readers with the same indefinable charm ascribed to it by Charles Lamb in an unpublished letter to Landor in 1882, when he wrote: "Many things I had to say to you which there was not time for. *One* why should I forget? 'Tis for Rose Aylmer, which has a charm I cannot explain. I lived upon it for weeks."

Myth and legend and reality have so united themselves regarding the personality of Rose

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Aylmer that many of the readers and lovers of Landor have hardly ascribed to her an existence more real than that of Poe's "Lenore." Yet Rose had a local habitation and a name and a most interesting history, however brief in its experiences on earth. The Honorable Rose Whitworth Aylmer was born in England in October, 1779, and died on March 2, 1800, in India. The Aylmer family date back to John Aylmer, bishop of London in the sixteenth century. From him was descended Baron Aylmer, the fourth of that title, who died in 1785. Lady Aylmer and her daughters were living in retirement in Swansea, Wales, when Landor, suspended from Oxford for some infringement of college rules, fixed on Swansea as his place of retreat to read Milton and Pindar, he being just twenty-one at the time; and thus the fates arranged their meeting. A younger sister of Rose became Mrs. Paynter and her two daughters, Rose and Sophy, were well known in London Society. Rose Paynter became Lady Graves-Sawle, and a miniature of her, painted by O. J. Taylor, portrays her as one of the most beautiful of women. To her Landor wrote a great number of letters ranging over the years

THE DREAM OF ROSE AYLMER

from about 1838 to 1868, shortly before his death. It was soon after establishing himself in Villa Landor on the Fiesolan hills that he met Mrs. Paynter — somewhere early in the decade of 1830–40. He had not seen her before since, as a little child, he remembered her when meeting daily with the beautiful Rose, the dream of his early youth. Mrs. Paynter gave him a lock of Rose's hair, a tress of burnished gold, which to the latest day of his life he kept in his cedar writing-desk. Not long before his death Landor opened this desk one day to show its treasures to Kate Field, who has thus recorded the incident :

“ ‘ Ianthe's portrait is not the only treasure this old desk contains,’ Landor said, as he replaced it and took up a small package, very carefully tied, which he undid with great precaution, as though the treasure had wings and might escape, if not well guarded. ‘ There ! ’ he said, holding up a pen-wiper made of red and gold stuff in the shape of a bell with an ivory handle, — ‘ that pen-wiper was given to me by — , Rose's sister, forty years ago. Would you believe it ? Have I not kept it well ? ’ The pen-wiper looked as though it had been made the day before, so fresh was it. ‘ Now,’

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

continued Landor, 'I intend to give that to you.'

"'But, Mr. Landor —'

"'Tut! tut! there are to be no buts about it. My passage for another world is already engaged, and I know you 'll take good care of my keepsake. There, now, put it in your pocket, and only use it on grand occasions.'

"Into my pocket the pen-wiper went, and, wrapped in the same old paper, it lies in another desk, as free from ink as it was four years ago.

"Who Rose was, no reader of Landor need be told, — she to whom 'Andrea of Hungary' was dedicated, and of whom Lady Blessington, in one of her letters to Landor, wrote: 'The tuneful bird, inspired of old by the Persian rose, warbled not more harmoniously its praise than you do that of the English Rose, whom posterity will know through your beautiful verses.' Many and many a time the gray-bearded poet related incidents of which this English Rose was the heroine, and for the moment seemed to live over again an interesting episode of his mature years."

It was undoubtedly the lady whom Landor called "Ianthe" to whom he wrote the stanzas :

THE DREAM OF ROSE AYLMER

"No, my own love of other years !
No, it must never be.
Much rests with you that yet endears,
Alas ! but what with me ?
Could those bright years o'er me revolve
So gay, o'er you so fair,
The pearl of life we would dissolve
And each the cup might share.
You show that truth can ne'er decay,
Whatever fate befalls ;
I, that the myrtle and the bay
Shoot fresh on ruin'd walls."

Stephen Wheeler, the accomplished editor of a number of "Letters," and heretofore unpublished writings of Landor, says in one of his interesting volumes :—

"I have been unable to find any portrait of Rose Aylmer. In Mr. Andrew Lang's collection of lyrics there is a picture of a ghost-like lady which is supposed to represent her, but it is, I fear, merely a fancy sketch. A portrait of Lady Graves-Sawle, Rose Aylmer's niece, was published in the 'Book of Beauty for 1840.'"

Rose Aylmer went out to India in May of 1798, with her uncle and aunt, Sir Henry and Lady Russell. Sir Henry was then the Judge of the Supreme Court of Judicature in Bombay and

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

he was one of the distinguished men of the time and was appointed to this responsible position by the Crown. Lady Russell took with her two nieces, Rose Aylmer and another young girl who became the wife of Sir Theophilus Metcalfe. Of Miss Aylmer's two years' life in India no record seems obtainable ; but her death is chronicled in an Indian journal entitled the " Asiatic Register," the notice reading that " the Hon. Miss Aylmer, a young lady of great beauty and accomplishments, died in Calcutta on March 8, 1800, of Asiatic cholera." Her tomb is in the design of a high shaft set on a pedestal composed of several tiers of steps. It is in the cemetery in South Park Street in Calcutta, and engraved on it is the following inscription : —

" In memory of the Honorable Rose Whitworth Aylmer, who departed this life March 8, 1800, aged twenty years."

It is said to be to her death that Landor alludes in the lines : —

" My pictures blacken in their frames
As night comes on,
And youthful maids and wrinkled dames
Are now all one.

THE DREAM OF ROSE AYLMER

"Death of the day ! A sterner Death
Did worse before ;
The fairest form, the sweetest breath
Away he bore."

When Mrs. Paynter gave the lock of her sister's hair to Landor, he wrote : —

"Beautiful spoils ! borne off from vanquisht death !
Upon my heart's high altar shall ye lie,
Moved but by only one adorer's breath,
Retaining youth, rewarding constancy."

To Lady Graves-Sawle before her marriage he wrote a little birthday verse that ran : —

"Ten days, ten only, intervene
Within your natal day
And mine, O Rose ! — but wide between
What *years* there spread away !"

The voluminous letters written by Landor to Lady Graves-Sawle, both for years before her marriage, and after it, up to the closing year of his life, reveal Landor in all his tenderness and playful joy of spirit. In Rose Paynter he felt some one akin to his dream-love, Rose Aylmer. Although Miss Paynter had never seen her aunt, yet for Rose Aylmer's sake as well as her own, she was endeared to Landor. Under date of

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

December, 1838, he writes to Rose Paynter in Paris: "You ought to be very happy, for you have taken all our happiness with you, and you know how much there was of it. When on one side of you is sorrow at leaving the most affectionate of mothers; on the other all the pleasures and all the hopes awaiting and inviting you, consider what a precious thing it is to be so beloved by everybody. It will never make you proud: may it always make you happy."

Again he playfully writes to her:—

"Did mamma ever let you into the secret that she sometimes writes Italian poetry? She wrote these lines on *the* Friday:—

PENSIERI DI MAMMA

'Si, reposa la mia Rosa!
La mattina pallidina
Segnera per infelici;
Chi sà, chi sà, quanti amici!
Sosterranno dire addio
Tutti quelli, — ma non io.'

"I never prided myself on my talents for translation, but I have attempted to give the

THE DREAM OF ROSE AYLMER

following as much the air of the original as possible:—

‘Calmly fall the night’s repose
On your eyelids, blessed Rose !
When pale morning shines again,
It will shine on bitter pain.
Friends who see you go away
(Oh, how many friends !) will say,
“Blessed Rose ! adieu ! adieu !”
I may bear to say it, too,
But alas ! when far from you.’

“. . . I have brought your rose-tree into the house this morning. It lost its last leaf the day you went. . . . Wear for my sake on your birthday the small white flower which you tell me has been admired in Paris. . . . You have much to do, much to see, much to enjoy ; I will not allow you to sacrifice too many half-hours in writing to me ; for I know that I shall always possess a quiet little nook in your memory.”

In a letter to Miss Paynter under date of March, 1889, accompanying a copy for her of his little volume, “Andrea of Hungary and Giovanna of Naples,” Landor says: “Believe me, it is a horrible thing to have many literary friends. They are apt to fancy that, however

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

your time may be occupied, you must at all events have time enough to read what they send you."

Of Dickens Landor wrote, in a letter to Miss Paynter: "You fill me with delight by your generous and just remarks on Dickens. No mortal man ever exerted so beneficial and extensive an influence over the human heart."

A little lyric written to this later Rose of his friendship thus runs:—

"Nay, thank me not again for those
Camellias, that untimely rose;
But if, whence you might please the more,
And win the few unwon before,
I sought the flowers you loved to wear
O'erjoyed to see them in your hair,
Upon my grave, I pray you, set
One primrose or one violet.
Nay, I can wait a little yet."

To Mrs. Paynter, Landor remarked in a letter that her daughter Rose had kept alive in him the spirit of poetry.

Miss Paynter was married in February of 1866 to Sir Charles Graves-Sawle, and for her wedding day Landor sent her a poem in which occur the lines:—

THE DREAM OF ROSE AYLMER

“ . . . Arise,
Far-sighted bride ! Look forward ! Clearer views
And higher hopes lie under calmer skies.
Fortune in vain called out to thee ; in vain
Rays from high regions darted ; Wit poured out
His sparkling treasures ; Wisdom laid his crown
Of richer jewels at thy reckless feet.
Well hast thou chosen. I repeat the words,
Adding as true ones, not untold before,
That incense must have fire for its ascent,
Else 't is inert and cannot reach the idol.”

For the birthday of Lady Graves-Sawle in 1857
he sent her the lyric : —

“ The shadows deepen round me ; take,
I will not say my last adieu,
But, this faint verse ; and for my sake
Keep the last line I trace for you.

“ The years that lightly touch your head
Nor steal away nor change one hair
Press upon mine with heavy tread
And leave but barren laurels there.”

In 1860 he is urging Lady Graves-Sawle and her husband to visit him in Florence. “ The Gulf of Spezia is quite as well worth seeing as the Bay of Naples,” he says, “ and Florence is richer in works of art than any other city in the world.”

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Again, in January of 1862, he writes to her of the many friends who are dead. "Mrs. Browning among these ; and Browning has gone to England, probably never to revisit Florence. There still remain Kirkup and Mrs. Trollope." And the last letter that Landor ever wrote to this cherished young friend was on her birthday, January 19, of 1864. "You see, dear Rose," he writes, "that I have not forgotten the nineteenth of January. May you have many such birthdays, all as happy as any in the past. In ten days more I shall enter my eighty-ninth year. . . . This is probably the last tidings you will receive from your affectionate old friend."

So it proved to be, although Landor lived on until the following September. But in all the chapters of human history there is perhaps no more tender and poetic idyl than this Dream of Rose Aylmer transferred from the beautiful ideal of his earliest youth to her niece and namesake, Rose Paynter, and thus continuing over a space of sixty-eight years, even into the closing years of his life.

In February of 1896 Sir Charles and Lady Graves-Sawle celebrated their golden wedding at their home in Penrice, Cornwall. They were the

THE DREAM OF ROSE AYLMER

recipients of many gifts, among which were a pair of gold Queen Anne cups, presented by the Earl of Mount-Edgcombe in behalf of the county magistrates, with an illuminated address and a gold clock from their tenantry. Sir Charles Graves-Sawle was then eighty years of age. This event of less than a decade since seems to strangely bridge the time from the lovely Rose Aylmer of Landor's most exquisite lyric to the present day. Nor can this chapter in the life of Walter Savage Landor have any other closing save the lyric — almost the last that ever came from his pen — that follows :

“The grave is open ; soon to close
On him who sang the charms of Rose,
Her pensive brow, her placid eye,
Her smile, angelic purity,
Her voice so sweet, her speech so sage,
It checked wild Youth and cheered dull Age,
Her truth when others were untrue,
And vows forgotten.

Friends, adieu !

The grave is open. . . . O how far
From under that bright morning star.”

The rest is silence.

There have been instances of culture developed by every high motive in turn, and yet intense at every point ; and the aim of our culture should be to attain not only as intense but as complete a life as possible. But often the higher life is only possible at all on condition of a selection of that in which one's motive is native and strong ; and this selection involves the renunciation of a crown reserved for others. Which is better ; to lay open a new sense, to initiate a new organ for the human spirit, or to cultivate many types of perfection up to a point which leaves us still beyond the range of their transforming power ?

WALTER PATER.

Too feeble fall the impressions of nature on us to make us artists. Every touch should thrill. Every man should be so much an artist that he could report in conversation what had befallen him.

EMERSON.



ENTRANCE TO GROUNDS OF VILLA LANDOR.

VI

"IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS."

It came into him, life ; it went out from him, truth ; it came to him, short-lived actions ; it went out from him, immortal thoughts.

EMERSON.

IN the entire range of English literature there is nothing, except Shakespeare, so remarkable in dramatic realization of a vast range of widely opposite and widely varying characters as are the "Imaginary Conversations" of Landor. It was his especial design not to allow one of these to contain "a single sentence written by, or recorded of the persons who are supposed to hold them," and this aim was absolutely realized. His ideal was to so entirely grasp and absorb into himself the personality of each character chosen as to be able to speak with the voice and think with the mind of the individuals therein presented. To divine, not what they said, but what they would have said, on a great variety of occasions and over a great range of topics, was the task Landor set himself to achieve. The power of

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

dramatic sympathy to enter thus into the very *penetralia* of life, — of the life of this numerous and varied assembly, is something almost beyond human conception. Landor's "Imaginary Conversations" are a colossal landmark in English literature. Lowell says that, with the single exception of Shakespeare, no poet has furnished so many delicate aphorisms of human nature, as has Landor. Their complete issue fills six large volumes which dramatize the thought, the personal attitude at a given moment, of dozens of the most marked individualities in the world, over a range of discussion that embraces art, philosophy, poetry, ethics, economics and history. Not only this, but the conversations hold every reader who approaches them under a spell of genius that cannot be analyzed or explained. The power that could successfully portray such a range of diverse characters as those that are presented in these "Dialogues," making each one take his conversational part in entire keeping with his own individuality and in true relation to the chronology, the environment, the circumstances of the time, is hardly less marvellous than that which created the dramas of Shakespeare. The characters in these "Conversations" are representative of al-

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

most every country and every age, — an immense and stately procession of the dominant individualities of the most diverse character and aims. Rousseau and Malesherbes discuss the question as to whether truth is the object of philosophy, Malesherbes asserting that, even if the object of philosophy, it is not of philosophers. “My opinion is,” Landor makes him say, “that truth is not reasonably the main and ultimate object of philosophy; but that philosophy should seek truth merely as the means of acquiring and of propagating happiness. Truths are simple; wisdom, which is formed by their apposition and application, is concrete: out of this, in its vast varieties, open to our wants and wishes, comes happiness. But the knowledge of all the truths ever yet discovered does not lead immediately to it, nor indeed will ever reach it, unless you make the more important of them bear upon your heart and intellect, and form, as it were, the blood that moves and nurtures them.”

Rousseau is still unconvinced. “I never entertained a doubt until now,” he rejoins, “that truth is the ultimate aim and object of philosophy: no writer has denied it, I think.”

Malesherbes concedes that none may: “but

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

when it is agreed," he continues, "that happiness is the chief good, it must also be agreed that the chief wisdom will pursue it; and I have already said, what your own experience cannot but have pointed out to you, that no truth, or series of truths, hypothetically, can communicate or attain it. Come, M. Rousseau, tell me candidly, do you derive no pleasure from a sense of superiority in genius and independence?"

"The highest," admits Rousseau, "from a consciousness of independence."

Gaining this admission Malesherbes proceeds: "*Ingenuous* is the epithet we affix to modesty, but modesty often makes men act otherwise than ingenuously: you, for example, now. You are angry at the servility of people, and disgusted at their obtuseness and indifference, on matters of most import to their welfare. If they were equal to you, this anger would cease; but the fire would break out somewhere else, on ground which appears at present sound and level. Voltaire, for instance, is less eloquent than you: but Voltaire is wittier than any man living. This quality —" "Is the quality of a buffoon and a courtier," Rousseau interrupts him by saying; "but the buffoon should have most of it," char-

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

acteristically adds Rousseau, “to support his higher dignity.”

Malesherbes observes that Voltaire’s dignity is Attic, and Rousseau rejoins: “If malignity is Attic. Petulance is not wit, although a few grains of wit may be found in petulance: quartz is not gold, although a few grains of gold may be found in quartz.”

Between Anne Boleyn and Henry VIII what an entirely different world of thought and feeling is entered by Landor and portrayed in their conversation.

“I do not regret that I have been a queen and am no longer one,” we find Anne saying; “nor that my innocence is called in question by those who never knew me; but I lament that the good people who loved me so cordially, hate and curse me; that those who pointed me out to their daughters for imitation check them when they speak about me; and that he whom next to God I have served with most devotion is my accuser.”

One of the most charming of these “Conversations” is that between “Boccaccio and Petrarca,” in which the author of the “Decameron” accosts the poet and assures him that there is no

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

doubt but that, if he could remain in Italy, he would soon receive the same distinctions as in his native country. "For greatly are the Florentines ashamed," Boccaccio continues, "that the most elegant of their writers and the most independent of their citizens lives in exile, by the injustice he had suffered in the detriment done to his property, through the intemperate administration of their laws."

"Let them recall me soon and honorably," vehemently replies Petrarca; "then perhaps I may assist them to remove their ignominy, which I carry about with me wherever I go, and which is pointed out by my exotic laurel."

Boccaccio rejoins that "there is, and ever will be, in all countries and under all governments, an ostracism for their greatest men."

Petrarca impatiently ignores this. "At present we will talk no more about it," he says; "tomorrow I pursue my journey towards Padua, where I am expected; where some few value and esteem me, honest and learned and ingenious men; although neither those Transpadane regions, nor whatever extends beyond them, have yet produced an equal to Boccaccio."

Boccaccio begs him, in the name of friendship,

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

not to go ; “form such friends rather from your fellow-citizens,” he urges. “I love my equals heartily ; and shall love them the better when I see them raised up here, from our own mother earth, by you.”

Boccaccio alludes to his house, and Petrarca rejoins : —

“The house has nothing of either the rustic or the magnificent about it ; nothing quite regular, nothing much varied. If there is anything at all affecting, as I fear there is, in the story you are about to tell me, I could wish the edifice itself bore externally some little of the interesting that I might hereafter turn my mind toward it, looking out of the catastrophe, though not away from it. But I do not even find the peculiar and uncostly decoration of our Tuscan villas, — the central turret, round which the kite perpetually circles in search of pigeons or smaller prey, borne onward, like the Flemish skater, by effortless will in motionless progression. The view of Fiesole must be lovely from that window ; but I fancy to myself it loses the cascade under the single high arch of the Mugnone.”

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

To which Boccaccio replies :—

“ I think so. In this villa— come rather further off: the inhabitants of it may hear us, if they should happen to be in the harbour, as most people are at the present hour of day—in this villa, Messer Francesco, lives Monna Tita Monalda, who tenderly loved Amadeo degi Oricellari.”

In the famous “ Conversation ” between Southey and Porson in which occurred the criticism of Wordsworth, Southey is represented as saying:

“ Hitherto our sentiments on poetry have been delivered down to us from authority; and if it can be demonstrated, as I think it may be, that the authority is inadequate, and that the dictates are often inapplicable and often misinterpreted, you will allow me to remove the cause out of court. Every man can see what is very bad in a poem; almost every one can see what is very good: but you, Mr. Porson, who have turned over all the volumes of all the commentators, will inform me whether I am right or wrong in asserting that no critic hath yet appeared who hath been able to fix or to discern the exact degrees of excellence above a certain point.”

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

“None,” tersely replies Porson.

“The reason is,” rejoined Southey, “because the eyes of no one have been upon a level with it. Supposing, for the sake of argument, the contest of Hesiod and Homer to have taken place: the judges who decided in favour of the worse, and he, indeed, in the poetry has little merit, may have been elegant, wise, and conscientious men. Their decision was in favour of that to the species of which they had been the most accustomed. Corinna was preferred to Pindar no fewer than five times, and the best judges in Greece gave her the preference; yet whatever were her powers, and beyond a question they were extraordinary, we may assure ourselves that she stood many degrees below Pindar.”

Petrarca and Boccaccio were highly esteemed by Landor, who did not sympathize with Lord Chesterfield in his opinion that the former deserved his *Laura* better than his *lauro*. The best evidence of this predilection is Landor's great work, “The Pentameron,” second only to his greatest, “Pericles and Aspasia.” Its *couleur locale* is marvellous. On every page there is a

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

glimpse of cloudless blue sky, a breath of warm sunny air, a sketch of Italian manner. The masterly *gusto* with which the author enters into the spirit of Italy would make us believe him to be "the noblest Roman of them all," had he not proved himself a better Grecian. Margaret Fuller realized this when, after comparing the "Pentameron" and "Petrarca" together, she wrote: "I find the prose of the Englishman worthy of the verse of the Italian. It is a happiness to see such marble beauty in the halls of a contemporary."

In "Pericles and Aspasia" one finds the keenest epigrammatic expression of Landor, as in such lines as these:—

"Like the ocean, love embraces the earth; and by love, as by the ocean, whatever is sordid and unsound is borne away."

"It is a casket not precious in itself, but valuable in proportion to what fortune, or industry, or virtue, has placed within it."

"Some tell us that there were twenty Homers, some deny that there was ever one. We are perpetually laboring to destroy our delight, our com-

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

posure, our devotion to superior power. Of all the animals upon earth, we least know what is good for us. My opinion is, that what is best for us is our admiration of good. No man living venerates Homer more than I do.”

The nobility of the counsel which Lander was able to offer is impressively revealed in the following paragraph from the “Pericles and Aspasia :” —

“If any young man would win to himself the hearts of the wise and brave, and is ambitious of being the guide and leader of them, let him be assured that his virtue will give him power and power will consolidate and maintain his virtue. Let him never then squander away the inestimable hours of youth in tangled and trifling disquisitions with such as perhaps have an interest in perverting or unsettling his opinions. But let him start from them with alacrity, and walk forth with firmness : let him early take an interest in the business and concerns of men ; and let him, as he goes along, look steadfastly at the images of those who have benefited his country and make with himself a solemn compact to stand hereafter among them.”

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Again we find :—

“ But take care to offend no philosopher of any sect whatever. Indeed to offend any person is the next foolish thing to being offended. I never do it unless when it is requisite to discredit somebody who might otherwise have the influence to diminish my estimation. Politeness is not always a sign of wisdom, but the want of it always leaves room for suspicion of folly, if folly and imprudence are the same.”

Regarding art, we find Landor saying :—

“ Sculpture and painting are moments of life : poetry is life itself, and everything around it and above it. ’

And of poetry he also says :—

“ No writer of florid prose ever was more than a secondary poet. Poetry in her high estate is delighted with exuberant abundance, but imposes on her worshipper a severity of selection. She has not only her days of festival, but also her days of abstinence and, unless on some that are set apart, prefers the graces of sedateness to the revelry of enthusiasm. She rejects, as inharmo-

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

nious and barbarous, the mimicry of her voice and manner by obstreperous sophists, and argute grammarians, and she scatters to the winds the loose fragments of the schools.”

In an impassioned paragraph Landor writes : —

“O Pericles ! how wrong are all who do not forever follow love, under one form or other ! There is no god but he, the framer, the preserver of the world, the pure intelligence ! All wisdom that is not enlightened and guided by him, is perturbed and perverted. . . . The happy never say, and never hear said, farewell.”

The dialogue between Vittoria Colonna and Michael Angelo offers such paragraphs as these :

“The beautiful in itself is useful by awaking our finer sensibilities, which it must be our own fault if we do not often carry with us into action. A well-ordered mind touches no branch of intellectual pleasure so brittle and incompilant as never to be turned to profit.”

And again : —

“Homer left a highway, over-shadowed with lofty trees and perennial leafage, between the re-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

gions of Allegory and Olympus. The gloom of Dante is deeper, and the boundaries even more indiscernible. We know the one is censured for it ; perhaps the other was."

Regarding greatness, Vittoria is represented as saying : —

"There are various kinds of greatness, as we all know ; however, the most part of those who profess one species is ready to acknowledge no other. The first and chief is intellectual. But surely those also are to be admitted into the number of the eminently great, who move large masses by action, by throwing their own ardent minds into the midst of popular assemblies or conflicting armies, compelling, directing, and subjecting. This greatness is indeed far from so desirable as that which shines serenely from above, to be our hope, comfort, and guidance : to lead us in spirit from a world of sad realities into one fresh from the poet's hand, and blooming with all the variety of his creation. Hence the most successful generals, and the most powerful kings will always be considered by the judicious and dispassionate as invested with less dignity, less extensive and en-

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

during authority than great philosophers and great poets.”

One of those keen aphorisms in which Landor abounds is thus expressed : —

“Little men, like little birds, are always attracted and caught by false lights.”

Landor's appreciation of Shakespeare was fine and profound. “A great poet represents a great portion of the human race,” he said. “Nature delegated to Shakespeare the interests and direction of the whole.”

In the context Landor added that “to Milton was given a smaller part, but with plenary power over it, and such fervor and majesty of eloquence was bestowed on him as on no other mortal in any age.”

The mental processes of Landor in poetic creation and also in the construction of the “Imaginary Conversations,” invite attention. Sir Joshua Reynolds once scraped a painting by Titian in an endeavor to learn the secret of his coloring; the critical reader of Landor cannot but long to find an equally intimate approach to the structural quality of his work. In a letter

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

written to John Forster in October of 1888, Landor himself refers to his creative processes as follows:—

“ . . . On Sunday I began a drama on Giovanna di Napoli (God defend us from the horrid sound, Joan of Naples!), and before I rose from my bed on Monday morning, I had written above a hundred and seventy verses, as good as any I ever wrote in my life, excepting my ‘Death of Clytemnestra.’ Of course I slept little. In fact, I scarcely sleep at all by night, while the people of my brain are talking. While others are drinking I doze and dream. . . .

“ . . . It is odd enough that I had written a good many scraps of two ‘Imaginary Conversations’ in which Giovanna is a speaker; but I cannot remember a syllable of them, nor would they do. She and Vittoria Colonna are my favorites among the women of Italy, as Boccaccio and Petrarca are among the men. But, to have clear perceptions of women, to elicit their thoughts, and hear their voices to advantage, I must be in the open air, in the sun—alas, in Italy, were it possible, my sprained ankle will not let me take my long and rapid strides. I

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

am an artificial man. I want all these helps for poetry. Quiet and silent nights are the next things needful.”

Of the creation of his tragedy, “Andrea of Hungary,” Landor writes that it was “conceived, planned, and executed in thirteen days; transcribed (the worst of the business) in six. Any man, I am now convinced,” he continues, “may write a dozen such within the year. The worst of it is, in anything dramatic, such is the rapidity of passion the words escape before they can be taken down. If you lose one you lose the tone of the person and never can recover it. . . . And the action is gone too. You have a dead man before you — but galvanized.”

The “Imaginary Conversation” between Southey and Porson first appeared (in 1828) in the “London Magazine.” The Dialogue that has Elizabeth and Burleigh for its speakers, has been called “a masterpiece of humor and character.” In all, Landor wrote one hundred and fifty of these “Conversations.” John Forster, commenting on them, remarks that it is their “unity in the astonishing variety, the fire of an irrepressible genius running

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

through the whole," that gives to them a place among books not likely to pass away. Mr. Forster adds:—

“The intensity and the range of mental power sufficiently declare themselves. There is scarcely a form of the human mind, serious or sprightly, imaginative, historical, fanciful, or real, which has not been brought into play in this extraordinary series of writings. When Emerson had made the book his companion for more than twenty years, he publicly expressed to Landor his gratitude for having given him a resource that had never failed him in solitude. He had but to turn to its rich and ample page to find always free and sustained thought, a keen and precise understanding, an industrious observation in every department of life, an experience to which it might seem that nothing had occurred in vain, honor for every just and generous sentiment, and a scourge like that of the Furies for every oppressor, whether public or private. Emerson pronounced Landor to be one of the foremost of that small class who make good in the nineteenth century the claims of pure literature.”

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

Wordsworth gave high appreciation to the “Conversations” and wrote to Landor saying, “Your dialogues are worthy of you, and a great acquisition to literature.”

A friend of Landor's expressed surprise one day on hearing him praise Alfieri, as he had seemed, in a note appended to the “Conversation between Galileo, Milton, and a Dominican,” to entertain a very different opinion of this poet. Reading the note referred to, Landor seemed to be greatly annoyed, and replied: “This is a mistake. It was never my intention to condemn Alfieri so sweepingly;” and a few days later he made the following correction: “Keats, in whom the spirit of poetry was stronger than in any contemporary, at home or abroad, delighted in Hellenic imagery and mythology, displaying them admirably; but no poet came nearer than Alfieri to the heroic, since Virgil. Disliking, as I do, prefaces and annotations, excrescences which hang loose like the deciduous bark on a plane-tree, I will here notice an omission of mine on Alfieri, in the ‘Imaginary Conversations.’ The words, ‘*There is not a glimpse of poetry in his Tragedies,*’ should be, as written, ‘*There is not an extraneous glimpse,*’ &c.”

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Later, Landor addressed these lines to Alfieri :

"Thou art present in my sight,
Though far removed from us, for thou alone
Hast touched the inmost fibres of the breast,
Since Tasso's tears made damper the damp floor
Whereon one only light came through the bars," &c. ;

thus redeeming the former note that misrepresented his real attitude toward the Italian poet.

The "Imaginary Conversations" are often brilliant and scintillating, often profound, and almost invariably epigrammatic in expression. Even as late in his life as January of 1861, Landor is meditating on another "Conversation," — one between Virgil and Horace ; and this he wrote in time for publication that spring when it appeared in the *Athenæum*. So these wonderful creations range over all times and topics. Garibaldi and Mazzini discuss, with emphasis half sad, half cynical, French honor and French veracity ; Tasso and Leonora di Esti meet and she implores her unfortunate lover to forget her, and dies happy with his assurance that he never can ; Sophocles and Pericles wander in Athens and the loyal enthusiasm of Pericles for his friend is eloquently expressed ; Washington and Franklin meet and discuss the free spirit of American

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

institutions ; Sir Philip Sidney and Greville discuss poetry ; Dante and Beatrice meet, and Hannibal and Marcellus. Alfieri and Salomon discuss Galileo, and the great Italian poet says ; “ Since the destruction of the republic, Florence has produced only one great man, Galileo, and abandoned him to every indignity that fanaticism and despotism could invent. Extraordinary men, like the stones that are formed in the higher regions of the air, fall upon the earth only to be broken and cast into the furnace. The precursor of Newton lived in the deserts of the moral world, drank water, and ate locusts and wild honey. It was fortunate that his head also was not lopped off : had a singer asked it, instead of a dancer, it would have been.”

“ In fact it was,” replies Salomon : “ for the fruits of it were shaken down and thrown away : he was forbidden to publish the most important of his discoveries, and the better part of his manuscripts was burned after his death.”

“ I would only persuade you,” rejoins Alfieri, “ that banter, pun, and quibble are the properties of light men and shallow capacities ; that genuine humour and true wit require a sound and capacious mind, which is always a grave one. Con-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

temptuousness is not incompatible with them : worthless is that man who feels no contempt for the worthless, and weak who treats their emptiness as a thing of weight. At first it may seem a paradox, but it is perfectly true, that the gravest nations have been the wittiest ; and in those nations some of the gravest men. In England, Swift and Addison, in Spain, Cervantes. Rabelais and La Fontaine are recorded by their countrymen to have been *rêveurs*. Few men have been graver than Pascal ; few have been wittier."

Landor represents one "Conversation" as taking place between himself and Delille, in which he expresses his own views on poetry in these words :—

"In poetry, there is a greater difference between the good and the excellent than there is between the bad and the good. Poetry has no golden mean ; mediocrity here is of another metal, which Voltaire, however, had skill enough to encrust and polish. In the least wretched of his tragedies, whatever is tolerable is Shakespeare's ; but, gracious Heaven ! how deteriorated ! When he pretends to extol a poet he chooses some

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

defective part, and renders it more so whenever he translates it. I will repeat a few verses from Metastasio in support of my assertion. Metastasio was both a better critic and a better poet, although of the second order in each quality; his tyrants are less philosophical, and his chambermaids less dogmatic. Voltaire was, however, a man of abilities, and author of many passable epigrams, beside those which are contained in his tragedies and heroics; yet it must be confessed that, like your Parisian lackeys, they are usually the smartest when out of place.”

To which Delille says in reply : —

“What you call epigram gives life and spirit to grave works, and seems principally wanted to relieve a long poem. I do not see why what pleases us in a star should not please us in a constellation.”

These “Conversations” offer the most remarkably wide range of intellectual interest; they are often choice in quality; they are of an order of literature which has impressed the critical mind profoundly, and the mind of the general reader very slightly. For one of the really great

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

authors, Landor's work is curiously unfamiliar to a large proportion of even very cultivated readers, — those whose impressions and opinions are on no account to be ruled out as having no value. While literature is by no means without its grave faults of cheap popularity that sometimes obscures high excellence, yet popularity, in the sense of a very wide and warm recognition, is not to be despised. The power to touch the popular mind is the first element of that universality which pre-determines greatness. It is the power to generate a living energy, the power to communicate vital truth in a manner so sympathetic, so swift in its recognition of the spiritual nature, as to be able to touch and arouse and inspire all that is noblest in humanity. Landor was a poet for poets. He was a classicist for classic scholars; but an author's true greatness can only be measured by the degree in which he enters into sympathy with the force and the mass of human character. It can only be measured by the comprehensiveness of his grasp, the breadth of his sympathies, the capacity to love men that he may thereby help them. The author who is worthy to be classed among the immortals is he who touches

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

life with spiritual power. The great fact in life is its divine destiny, and he is greatest of all who most significantly and sympathetically interprets and illuminates this destiny.

However superior in quality may be the “saving remnant,” it is yet more profoundly true that real greatness lies in the more universal appeal; in the possession of that marvellous power of vital imagination which conceives of life in its wholeness. Far greater than literature is life.

“ It may be glorious to write
Thoughts that shall glad the two or three
High souls, like those far stars that come in sight
Once in a century ;

“ But better far it is to speak
One simple word which, now and then,
Shall waken their free natures in the weak
And friendless sons of men.”

It is not, therefore, the fact that Landor’s audience was few though fit, — that his appeal is to the more highly cultured rather than to all humanity, — which is recorded to its credit. On the contrary, it is here that his defects and failures lie. No man, no author, is truly great

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

until his entire intellectual life is fused with his moral life ; until every gift and grace is transfigured into that spirituality that gives freely of love and sympathy to all ; that is filled with all high interests and is characterized by forgetfulness of self and remembrance of others. These are lessons that awaited Walter Savage Landor farther on in the processes of unfoldment after leaving this world for the life more abundant. Yet that great thoughts were his daily food, is true : and his undisciplined temper, violent and unreasonable as were often its manifestations, still never degenerated into any petty meanness, or any lasting malevolence. " Humanity at best is weak and can only be divine by flashes," said Kate Field of Landor, in writing of his last days, and she added : " The Pythia was a stupid old woman, saving when she sat upon the tripod. Seeing genius to the best advantage in its work, — not always but most frequently, — they are wisest who love the artist without demanding personal perfection. It is rational to conclude that the loftiest possible genius should be allied to the most perfect specimen of man, heart holding equal sway with head. A great man, however, need not be a great artist, — that is, of

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

course, understood; but time ought to prove that the highest form of art can only emanate from the noblest type of humanity. The most glorious inspirations must flow through the purest channels. But this is the genius of the future, as far removed from what is best known as order is removed from chaos.”

So swift has been the march of ethical ideals that what appeared in the latter quarter of the nineteenth century as the vision of the future is almost, in these early years of the twentieth century, the practical working ideal of to-day.

The early literary experience of Landor was steeped in no little stress and storm, although largely, it is true, these tumults were of his own creation. “Landor’s characteristic fault,” writes Kate Field, “was that of a temper so undisciplined and impulsive as to be somewhat hurricane in its consequences, though not unlike the Australian boomerang, it frequently returned whence it came, and injured no one but the possessor. Circumstances aggravated, rather than diminished, this Landorian idiosyncrasy. Born in prosperity, heir to a large landed estate, and educated in aristocratic traditions, Walter Savage Landor began life without a struggle,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

and throughout a long career remained master of the situation, independent of the world and its favors. Perhaps too much freedom is as unfortunate in its results upon character as too much dependence. A nature to be properly developed should receive as well as give."

It is true, however, that with all his vehemence, his impatience, and his impetuosity, Landor united great courtesy, great gentleness, and tenderness of heart. Edward Dowden says of him that the times "when other men would be incapacitated by tremulous hand or throbbing brow for pure and free imagining and delicate manipulation, were precisely the productive periods with Landor. Not that he transmuted his dross of life into gold of art, or taught in song what he had learnt in suffering; rather, he would listen to no lessons of suffering, but escaped from them into the arms of joy. Among these apparent inconsistencies of Landor's character that one is especially noteworthy which is indicated by the presence of so much disorder and disproportion in his conduct of life (if conduct it can be called), and in the opinions and sentiments expressed in not a little of what he wrote, and the presence of so much order, proportion, and har-

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS ”

mony in the form of his artistic products — so much austere strength in some, so much beauty in others, which would be recognised as severe if it were not so absolutely beautiful.” It was in such an hour as this that he wrote the stanza :—

“ I strove with none ; for none was worth my strife,
Nature I loved, and after Nature, Art ;
I warmed both hands before the fire of life,
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.”

Although Landor's work appeals to the few rather than to the many, he was yet an ardent lover of liberty, an intense sympathizer with the larger life and greater opportunities for the people. In his admiration for Garibaldi, Mazzini, Cavour, and Kossuth, he was fairly a hero worshipper. His “ Imaginary Conversation ” between Savonarola and the Prior of Florence was written with the object of devoting its proceeds to the aid of Garibaldi's troops. Those who have cared for Landor, however, make up in zeal what they lack in numbers. Wordsworth, Lamb, Southey, and Shelley spoke and wrote of him with the utmost enthusiasm. Mrs. Browning declared that if it were not for the necessity of getting through a book, some of the

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

pages of the "Pentameron" were too delicious to turn over.

Swinburne pronounces on Landor an incomparable verdict. "In the course of his long life," writes the younger poet of the elder, "he had won for himself such a crown of glory in verse and in prose as has been won by no other Englishman but Milton." As a poet, Mr. Swinburne assigns to Landor a place between Byron and Shelley, "as far above the former as below the latter," and he adds: "If we except Catullus and Simonides, it might be hard to match, and it would be impossible to over-match, the flawless and blameless, yet living and breathing beauty of his most perfect elegies, epigrams, and epitaphs. . . . His passionate compassion, his bitter and burning pity for all wrongs endured in all the world found only their natural outlet in his lifelong defence of tyrannicide as the last resource of baffled justice, the last discharge of heroic duty. . . . He was surely the most gentle and generous, as the most headstrong and hot-headed of heroes or of men. Nor ever was any man's best work more thoroughly imbued and informed with evidence of his noblest qualities. His loyalty and liberality of heart were as

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

inexhaustible as his bounty and beneficence of hand.”

Turning from his personal character to his work, Mr. Swinburne finely says: “On either side, immediately or hardly below his mighty masterpiece of ‘Pericles and Aspasia,’ stand the two scarcely less beautiful and vivid studies of mediæval Italy and Shakespearean England. The very finest flower of his immortal dialogues is probably to be found in the ‘Imaginary Conversations of Greeks and Romans;’ his utmost command of passion and pathos may be tested by their transcendent success in the distilled and concentrated tragedy of ‘Tiberius and Virginia,’ where for once he shows a quality more proper to romantic than classical imagination, — the subtle and sublime and terrible power to enter the dark vestibule of distraction, to throw the whole force of his fancy, the whole fire of his spirit into the shadowing passion (as Shakespeare calls it) of gradually imminent insanity.”

Of the “Conversation” wherein Cicero is introduced, John Forster, Landor’s biographer, finely says:—

“It would nevertheless be difficult, filled as it is with sayings Ciceronian, to exhibit their im-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

pressiveness by extracting even the best of them. The conversation is so infinitely better than anything that can be taken from it. It unfolds itself in such fine gradations as the brothers walk along the shore, their thoughts toned and tempered by skyey influences, and their spirits drawn nearer not more by conscious remembrance of the past than by that dim foreboding of some coming change, the forecast of a final quiet to which both are drawing near, which so often accompanies the approach of death. The very mildness of the winter evening, with a softness in its moist, still air allied to the gentleness of sorrow, plays its part in the dialogue. As they retrace their steps, the purple light that had invested the cliffs and shore has faded off, and the night quite suddenly closes in; of the promontories, the long, irregular breakers under them, the little solitary Circæan hill, the neighboring whiter rocks of Anxur, the spot where the mother of the Gracchi lived, nothing further is discernible; all the nobleness of the surrounding or the far-off landscape, recalling scenes of friendship and recollections of greatness, has passed away; they see now but the darkness of the ignoble present, and as, on reaching home,

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

they notice the servants lighting the lamps in the villa and making preparation for the birthday on the morrow, the thought at length consciously arises to Marcus whether that coming birthday, least pleasurable to him as it must be, may not also be his last.”

Like Emerson, Landor was accustomed to compose in the open air. In one of his “Conversations” he represents Epicurus as saying :

“I assemble and arrange my thoughts, with freedom and with pleasure in the fresh air and open sky ; and they are more lively and vigorous and exuberant when I catch them as I walk about and commune with them in silence and seclusion.”

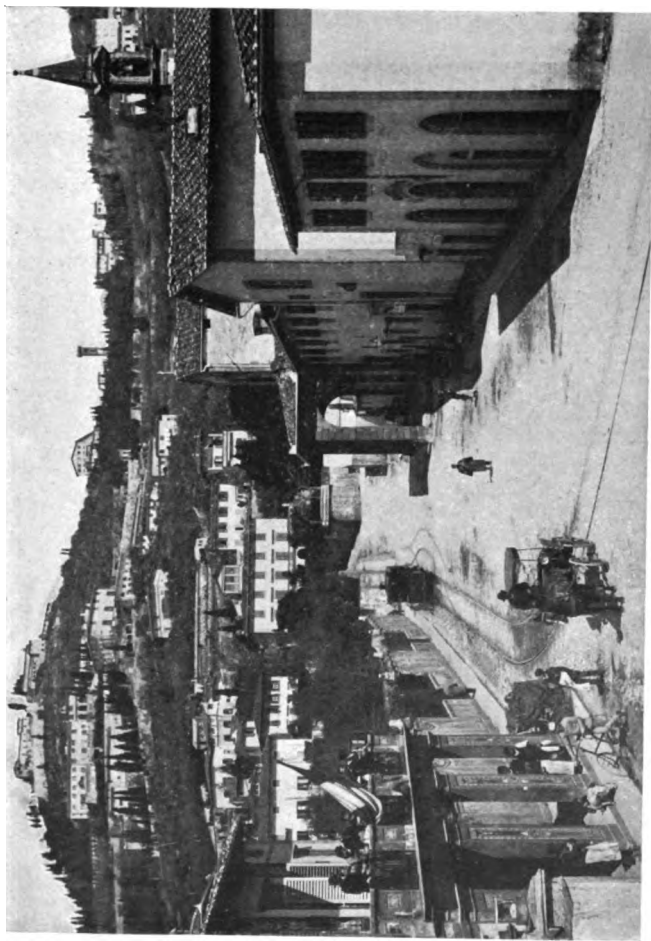
And of himself Landor once said ; “It is my practice, and ever has been, to walk quite alone. In my walks I collect my arguments, arrange my sentences, and utter them aloud. Eloquence with me can do little else in the city than put on her bracelets, tighten her sandals, and show herself to the people. Her health and vigor and beauty, if she has any, are the fruits of the open fields.”

Landor was especially felicitous in his atmos-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

phere in those of his "Conversations" where Greek characters were introduced. His mind was essentially Grecian in its cast. Of the "Pericles and Aspasia," Elizabeth Barrett said, as early as in 1839, that it revealed Landor to be, of all living writers, "the most unconventional in thought and word, the most classical, because the freest from mere classicalism, the most Greek, because pre-eminently and purely English, and the fittest of all to achieve what Plato calls a triumph in eloquence, the successful commendation of Athens in the midst of the Peloponnesus."

Traditions have drifted down, even to the Florence of to-day, of the appearance of Landor wandering alone on the Fiesolan hills, composing his wonderful "Conversations" aloud. The picture is one to record itself in memory. The ancient Etruscan wall that still guards the southern side of the slope; the old Palazzo Pretorio, filled with vases, lamps, coins, and marbles found in the excavations at Fiesole; the Franciscan monastery occupying the site of the old Acropolis of Fæsulæ, and the church of San Alessandro standing now as Landor knew them and as they have stood for centuries; and



VIEW OF FIESOLE.

100

“IMAGINARY CONVERSATIONS”

the beautiful view of the valley of Florence spread out below, from the Carrara to the Casentino — here the loiterer may still see in fancy the majestic form of the poet as he walked alone and rehearsed aloud to himself, in the freedom and solitude of the open air, these dialogues of his famous creation. Literally, he seemed to speak them into being. He may have wandered into the gardens of the Medici among the antique statues that the great Lorenzo loved. With his genius in harmony with itself, as it was in those hours of creation, the entire atmosphere was all wings and flowers, and a strangeness, like that which invests the blossoming of the aloe, still thrills the landscape in these pictures of fancy that pervade the haunts of Boccaccio and of Walter Savage Landor. In the conversation between Alfieri and Salomon, Landor makes Alfieri say : —

“Look from the window. That cottage on the declivity was Dante’s. That square and large mansion, with a circular garden before it elevated artificially, was the first scene of Boccaccio’s *Decameron*. A boy might stand at an equal distance between them, and break the win-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

dows of each with his sling. . . . A town so little that the voice of a cabbage-girl in the midst of it may be heard at the extremities, reared within three centuries a greater number of citizens illustrious for their genius than all the remainder of the Continent (excepting her sister Athens) in six thousand years. Smile as you will, Signor Conte, what must I think of a city where Michael Angelo, Frate Bartolommeo, Ghiberte (who formed them), Guicciardini, and Machiavelli were secondary men? And certainly such were they, if we compare them with Galileo and Boccaccio and Dante."

It is one of those beautiful correspondences in life that in the very heart of the romantic valley where Boccaccio had placed his Lago delle Belle Donne, Landor came to possess the villa that was surrounded by the scenes forever associated with Lorenzo il Magnifico and the brilliant galaxy of scholars, including the great and good Pico della Mirandola, that Lorenzo drew about him. There was a radiant magnetic line of sequences running through Landor's entire life that reveal themselves impressively through the perspective of time.

*God's prophets of the Beautiful
These poets were. . . .*

*If all the crowns of earth must wound
With prickings of the thorns He found, —
If saddest sighs swell sweetest sound, —*

*What say ye unto this ? — refuse
The baptism in salt water ? — choose
Calm breasts, mute lips, and labour loose ?*

*" Or, O ye gifted givers ! ye
Who give your liberal hearts to me
To make the world this harmony,*

*" Are ye resigned that they be spent
To such world's help ? " The Spirits bent
Their awful brows and said ' Content.' "*

*" Glory to God — to God ! " he saith,
" Knowledge by suffering entereth,
And Life is perfected by Death."*

ELIZABETH BARRETT BROWNING.

*Not with disdain of days that were
Look earthward now ;
Let dreams revive the reverend hair,
The imperial brow ;*

*Come back in sleep, for in the life
Where thou art not
We find none like thee. Time and strife
And the world's lot*

*Move thee no more ; but love at least
And reverent heart
May move thee, royal and released
Soul, as thou art.*

ALGERNON CHARLES SWINBURNE.
In memory of Walter Savage Landor.

VII

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

I strove with none, for none was worth my strife ;
Nature I loved, and after Nature, Art ;
I warmed both hands before the fire of life ;
It sinks, and I am ready to depart.

WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

THE closing years of Landor's life were a veritable twilight of the gods, shot through with golden rays from the tender courtesies and beautiful kindness of the Brownings and the Storys. Their friendship sustained his last lonely years and made them, indeed, in many ways, the fairest of all his earthly experiences. The portrait of Mr. Landor, painted when he was eighty years of age and reproduced as the frontispiece of this volume, is the work of Charles Caryll Coleman, who was then a young art-student in Italy. It was painted for Kate Field, who thus narrates the preliminary conversation : —

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

“‘Mr. Landor, do you remember the young artist who called on you one day?’

“‘Yes, and a nice fellow he seemed to be.’

“‘He was greatly taken with your head.’

“(Humorously.) ‘You are quite sure he was not smitten with my face?’

“‘No, I am not sure, for he expressed himself enthusiastically about your beard. He says you are a fine subject for a study.’

“No answer.

“‘Would you allow him to make a sketch of you, Mr. Landor? He is exceedingly anxious to do so.’

“‘No; I do not wish my face to be public property. I detest this publicity that men now-a-days seem to be so fond of. There is a painting of me in England. D’Orsay, too, made a drawing of me’ (I think he said drawing) ‘once when I was visiting Gore House, — a very good thing it was, too, — and there is a bust executed by Gibson when I was in Rome. These are quite sufficient. I have often been urged to allow my portrait to be inserted in my books, but never would I give my consent.’ (Notwithstanding this assertion, it may be found in the ‘Last Fruit.’) ‘It is a custom that I detest.’

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

“‘But, Mr. Landor, you had your photograph taken lately.’

“‘That was to oblige my good friend Browning, who has been so exceedingly kind and attentive to me. I could not refuse him.’

“‘But, Mr. Landor, this is entirely between ourselves. It does not concern the public in the least. My friend wants to make a study of your head, and I want the study.’

“‘Oh, the painting is for you, is it?’

“‘Yes. I want to have something of you in oil colors.’

“‘Ah, to be sure! the old creature’s complexion is so fresh and fair. Well, I’ll tell you what I will do. Your friend may come, provided you come with him,—and act as chaperon!’ This was said laughingly.

“‘That I will do with pleasure.’

“‘But stop!’ added Landor after a pause. ‘I must be taken without my beard!’

“‘Oh, no! Mr. Landor, that cannot be. Why, you will spoil the picture. You won’t look like a patriarch without a beard.’

“‘I ordered my barber to come and shear me to-morrow. The weather is getting to be very warm, and a heavy beard is exceed-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

ingly uncomfortable. I *must* be shaved to-morrow.'

" 'Pray countermand the order, dear Mr. Landor. Do retain your beard until the picture is completed. You will not be obliged to wait long. We shall all be so disappointed if you don't.'

" 'Well, well, I suppose I must submit.'

" And thus the matter was amicably arranged, to our infinite satisfaction.

" Those sittings were very pleasant to the artist and his chaperon, and were not disagreeable, I think, to the model. Seated in his arm-chair, with his back to the window that the light might fall on the top of his head and form a sort of glory, Landor looked every inch a seer, and would entertain us with interesting though un-seerlike recollections, while the artist was busy with his brush."

Landor frequently passed an evening at Casa Guidi with his devoted friends, and of one of these occasions Miss Field relates the following story : —

" Apropos of old songs, Landor has laid his offering upon their neglected altar. I shall not

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

forget that evening at Casa Guidi,—I can forget no evening passed there, — when, just as the tea was being placed upon the table, Robert Browning turned to Landor, who was that night's honored guest, gracefully thanked him for his defence of old songs, and, opening the 'Last Fruit,' read in his clear, manly voice the following passages from the Idyls of Theocritus: 'We often hear that such or such a thing is not worth an old song. Alas! how very few things are! What precious recollections do some of them awaken! what pleasurable tears do they excite! They purify the stream of life; they can delay it on its shelves and rapids; they can turn it back again to the soft moss amidst which its sources issue.'

"'Ah, you are kind,' replied the gratified author. 'You always find out the best bits in my books.'

"I have never seen anything of its kind so chivalric as the deference paid by Robert Browning to Walter Savage Landor. It was loyal homage rendered by a poet, in all the glow of power and impulsive magnetism, to 'an old master.'"

Out of her memories of these social evenings with the Brownings and Landor, Miss Field also writes:—

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

“Landor entertained a genuine affection for the memory of Lady Blessington. ‘Ah, there was a woman!’ he exclaimed one day with a sigh. ‘I never knew so brilliant and witty a person in conversation. She was most generous too, and kind-hearted. I never heard her make an ill-natured remark. It was my custom to visit her whenever the laurel was in bloom; and as the season approached, she would write me a note, saying, “Gore House expects you, for the laurel has begun to blossom.” I never see laurel now, that it does not make me sad, for it recalls her to me so vividly. During these visits I never saw Lady Blessington until dinner-time. She always breakfasted in her own room, and wrote during the morning. She wrote very well, too; her style was pure. In the evening her drawing-room was thrown open to her friends, except when she attended the opera. Her opera-box faced the Queen’s and a formidable rival she was to her Majesty.’

“D’Orsay was an Apollo in beauty, very amiable, and had considerable talent for modelling. Taking me into his little back sitting-room, Landor brought out a small album, and, passing over the likenesses of several old friends, among whom

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

were Southey, Porson, Napier, and other celebrities, he held up an engraving of Lady Blessington. Upon my remarking its beauty, Landor replied: 'That was taken at the age of fifty, so you can imagine how beautiful she must have been in her youth. Her voice and laugh were very musical.' Then, turning to a young lady present, Landor made her an exceedingly neat compliment, by saying, '*Your* voice reminds me very vividly of Lady Blessington's. Perhaps,' he continued with a smile, 'this is the reason why my old, deaf ears never lose a word when you are speaking.' Driving along the north side of the Arno one summer's day, Landor gazed sadly at a terrace overlooking the water, and said: 'Many a delightful evening have I spent on that terrace with Lord and Lady Blessington. There we used to take our tea. They once visited Florence for no other purpose than to see me. Was not that friendly? They are both dead now, and I am doomed to live on. When Lady Blessington died, I was asked to write a Latin epitaph for her tomb, which I did; but some officious person thought to improve the Latin before it was engraved, and ruined it.'

"This friendship was fully reciprocated by Lady

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Blessington, who, in her letters to Landor, refers no less than three times to those 'calm nights on the terrace of the Casa Pelosi.' 'I send you,' she writes, the 'engraving, and have only to wish that it may sometimes remind you of the original.

. . . . Five fleeting years have gone by since our delicious evenings on the lovely Arno, — evenings never to be forgotten, and the recollections of which ought to cement the friendships then formed.' Again, in her books of travel, — the 'Idler in France' and 'Idler in Italy,' — Lady Blessington pays the very highest tribute to Landor's heart, as well as intellect, and declares his real conversations to be quite as delightful as his imaginary ones. She who will live long in history as the friend of great men now lies beneath the chestnut shade of Saint Germain; and Landor, with the indignation of one who loved her, has turned to D'Orsay, asking —

"'Who was it squandered all her wealth,
And swept away the bloom of health?'

"One day," continues Miss Field, in her reminiscences of the Landor days, "the conversation turned to Aubrey De Vere, the beautiful Catholic poet of Ireland, whose name is scarcely

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

known on this side of the Atlantic. This is our loss, though De Vere can never be a popular poet for his muse lives in the past and breathes ether rather than air. 'De Vere is charming, both as man and as poet,' said Landor enthusiastically, rising as he spoke and leaving the room, to return immediately with a small volume of De Vere's poems published at Oxford in 1848. 'Here are his poems, given to me by himself. Such a modest, unassuming man as he is! Now listen to this from the "Ode on the Ascent of the Alps." Is it not magnificent?

" "I spake — Behold her o'er the broad lake flying :
Like a great Angel missioned to bestow
Some boon on men beneath in sadness lying :
The waves are murmuring silver murmurs low :
Over the waves are borne
Those feeble lights which, ere the eyes of Morn
Are lifted, through her lids and lashes flow.
Beneath the curdling wind
Green through the shades the waters rush and roll,
Or whitened only by the unfrequent shoal ; —
Lo ! two dark hills, with darker yet behind,
Confront them, purple mountains almost black,
Each behind each self-folded and withdrawn
Beneath the umbrage of yon cloudy rack —
That orange gleam ! 't is dawn !
Onward ! the swan's flight with the eagle's blending,
On, wingèd Muse ; still forward and ascending ! "

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

“ ‘This sonnet on Sunrise,’ continued Landor,
‘is the noblest that ever was written : —

“ ‘ I saw the Master of the Sun. He stood
High in his luminous car, himself more bright.
An Archer of immeasurable might ;
On his left shoulder hung his quivered load ;
Spurned by his Steeds the eastern mountain glowed ;
Forward his eager eye and brow of light
He bent ; and while both hands that arch embowed,
Shaft after shaft pursued the flying Night.
No wings profaned that godlike form : around
His neck high held an ever-moving crowd
Of locks hung glistening ; while such perfect sound
Fell from his bowstring, *that th' ethereal dome*
Thrilled as a dew-drop ; and each passing cloud
Expanded, whitening like the ocean foam.”

“ ‘ Is not this line grand ? —

“ ‘ Peals the strong, voluminous thunder ! ”

And how incomparable is the termination of this
song ! —

“ ‘ Bright was her soul as Dian’s crest
Showering on Vesta’s fane its sheen :
Cold looked she as the waveless breast
Of some stone Dian at thirteen.
Men loved : but hope they deemed to be
A sweet Impossibility ! ”

Here are two beautiful lines from the Grecian
Ode : —

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

"Those sinuous streams that blushing wander
Through labyrinthine oleander."

This is like Shakespeare : —

"Yea, and the Queen of Love, as fame reports,
Was caught, — no doubt in Bacchic wreaths — for Bacchus
Such puissance hath, that he old oaks will twine
Into true-lovers' knots, and laughing stand
Until the sun goes down."

And an admirable passage is this, too, from the same poem, "The Search after Proserpine":

"Yea and the motions of her trees and harvests
Resemble those of slaves, reluctant, slow,
By outward force compelled; *not like our billows,*
Springing elastic in impetuous joy,
Or indolently swayed."

"'There!' exclaimed Landor, closing the book,
'I want you to have this. It will be none the less valuable because I have scribbled in it,' he added with a smile.

"'But, Mr. Landor —'

"'Now don't say a word. I am an old man, and if both my legs are not in the grave, they ought to be. I cannot lay up such treasures in heaven, you know, — saving of course in my memory, — and De Vere had rather you should

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

have it than the rats. There's a compliment for you! so put the book in your pocket.'

"This little volume is marked throughout by Landor with notes of admiration, and if I here transcribe a few of his favorite poems, it will be with the hope of benefiting many readers to whom *De Vere* is a sealed book.

"'Greece never produced anything so exquisite,' wrote Landor beneath the following song :

" ' Give me back my heart, fair child ;
To you as yet 'twere worth but little
Half beguiler, half beguiled,
Be you warned, your own is brittle :
I know it by your redd'ning cheeks,
I know it by those two black streaks
Arching up your pearly brows
In a momentary laughter,
Stretched in long and dark repose
With a sigh the moment after.

" " Hid it ! dropt it on the moors !
Lost it, and you cannot find it " —
My own heart I want, not yours :
You have bound and must unbind it.
Set it free then from your net,
We will love, sweet — but not yet !
Fling it from you ; — we are strong ;
Love is trouble, love is folly ;
Love, that makes an old heart young,
Makes a young heart melancholy.'

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

“And for this Landor claimed that it was
‘finer than the best in Horace’ :—

“ ‘Slanting both hands against her forehead,
On me she levelled her bright eyes.
My whole heart brightened as the sea
When midnight clouds part suddenly :—
Through all my spirit went the lustre,
Like starlight poured through purple skies.

“ ‘And then she sang a loud, sweet music ;
Yet louder as aloft it clomb :
Soft when her curving lips it left ;
Then rising till the heavens were cleft,
As though each strain, on high expanding,
Were echoed in a silver dome.

“ ‘But hark ! she sings “she does not love me” :
She loves to say she ne’er can love,
To me her beauty she denies, —
Bending the while on me those eyes,
Whose beams might charm the mountain leopard,
Or lure Jove’s herald from above ! ’

“Below the following exquisite bit of melody
is written, ‘Never was any sonnet so beautiful.’

“ ‘She whom this heart must ever hold most dear
(This heart in happy bondage held so long)
Began to sing : At first a gentle fear
Rosied her countenance, for she is young,
And he who loves her most of all was near ;
But when at last her voice grew full and strong,

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

O ! from their ambush sweet, how rich and clear
The notes were showered abroad, a rapturous throng !
Her little hands were sometimes flung apart,
And sometimes palm to palm together prest,
While wavelike blushes rising from her breast
Kept time with that aerial melody,
As music to the sight ! — I standing nigh
Received the falling fountain in my heart.'

“ ‘What sonnet of Petrarca equals this?’ he
says of the following :—

“ ‘Happy are they who kiss thee, morn and even,
Parting the hair upon thy forehead white :
For them the sky is bluer and more bright,
And purer their thanksgivings rise to Heaven.
Happy are they to whom thy songs are given ;
Happy are they on whom thy hands alight :
And happiest they for whom thy prayers at night
In tender piety so oft have striven.
Away with vain regrets and selfish sighs —
Even I, dear friend, am lonely, not unblest :
Permitted sometimes on that form to gaze,
Or feel the light of those consoling eyes :
If but a moment on my cheek it stays,
I know that gentle beam from all the rest !’

“ ‘Like Shakespeare’s, but better,’ is this allegory :—

“ ‘You say that you have given your love to me.
Ah, give it not, but lend it me ; and say
That you will ofttimes ask me to repay,
But never to restore it : so shall we,

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

Retaining, still bestow perpetually :
So shall I ask thee for it every day,
Securely as for daily bread we pray ;
So all of favor, naught of right shall be.
The joy which now is mine shall leave me never.
Indeed, I have deserved it not ; and yet
No painful blush is mine, — so soon my face
Blushing is hid in that beloved embrace.
Myself I would condemn not, but forget ;
Remembering thee alone, and thee forever !

“ ‘ Worthy of Raleigh and like him,’ is Landor’s
preface to the following sonnet : —

“ ‘ Flowers I would bring, if flowers could make thee fairer,
And music, if the Muse were dear to thee,
(For loving these would make thee love the bearer :)
But sweetest songs forget their melody,
And loveliest flowers would but conceal the wearer :
A rose I marked, and might have plucked ; but she
Blushed as she bent, imploring me to spare her,
Nor spoil her beauty by such rivalry.
Alas ! and with what gifts shall I pursue thee,
What offerings bring, what treasures lay before thee,
When earth with all her floral train doth woo thee,
And all old poets and old songs adore thee,
And love to thee is naught, from passionate mood
Secured by joy’s complacent plenitude ! ’

“ Occasionally Landor indulges in a little
humorous indignation, particularly in his re-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

marks on the poem of which Coleridge is the hero. De Vere's lines end thus : —

“Soft be the sound ordained thy sleep to break !
When thou art waking, wake me, for thy Master's sake.”

“And let me nap on,” wrote the august critic, who had no desire to meet Coleridge, even as a celestial being.

“Now and then there is a dash of the pencil across some final verse, with the remark, ‘Better without these.’ Twice or thrice Landor finds fault with a word.

“The following note,” continues Miss Field, “is worthy to be transcribed, showing as it does the generosity of his nature at a time when he had nothing to give away but ideas. Landor wrote : —

“MY DEAR FRIEND, — Will you think it worth your while to transcribe the enclosed ? These pages I have corrected and enlarged. Some of them you have never seen. They have occupied more of my time and trouble, and are now more complete, than anything you have favored me by reading. I hope you will be pleased. I care less about others. . . . I hope you will get something for these articles, and

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

keep it. I am richer by several crowns than you suspect, and I must scramble to the kingdom of Heaven, to which a full pocket, we learn, is an impediment.

Ever truly yours,

W. S. L.

“The manuscripts contained the two conversations between Homer and Laertes which two years ago were published in the ‘Heroic Idyls.’ I did not put them to the use desired by their author. Though my copies differ somewhat from the printed ones, it is natural to conclude that Landor most approved of what was last submitted to his inspection, and would not desire to be seen in any other guise. The publicity of a note prefixed to one of these conversations, however is warranted.

“It will be thought audacious, and most so by those who know the least of Homer, to represent him as talking so familiarly. He must often have done it, as Milton and Shakespeare did. There is homely talk in the ‘Odyssey.’

“Fashion turns round like Fortune. Twenty years hence, perhaps, this conversation of Homer and Laertes, in which for the first time Greek

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

domestic manners have been represented by any modern poet, may be recognized and approved."

Miss Field again writes : —

"Popular as is the belief that Landor's gifts were the offspring of profound study, he himself says : ' Only four years of my life were given up much to study ; and I regret that I spent so many so ill. Even these debarred me from no pleasure ; for I seldom read or wrote within doors, excepting a few hours at night. The learning of those who are called the learned is learning at second hand ; the primary and most important must be acquired by reading in our own bosoms ; the rest by a deep insight into other men's. What is written is mostly an imperfect and unfaithful copy.' This confession emanates from one who is claimed as a university rather than a universal man. Landor remained but two years at Oxford, and, though deeply interested in the classics, never contended for a Latin prize. Speaking of this one day, he said : ' I once wrote some Latin verses for a fellow of my college who, being in great trouble, came to me for aid. What was hard work to him was

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

pastime to me, and it ended in my composing the entire poem. At the time the fellow was very grateful, but it happened that these verses excited attention and were much eulogized. The supposed author accepted the praise as due to himself. This of course I expected, as he knew full well I would never betray him; but the amusing part of the matter was that the fellow never afterwards spoke to me, never came near me, — in fact, treated me as though I had done him a grievous wrong. It was of no consequence to me that he strutted about in my feathers. If they became him, he was welcome to them, — but of such is the kingdom of cowards.’”

“Poetry,” writes Landor, “was always my amusement, prose my study and business.” In his twentieth year he lived in the woods, “did not exchange twelve sentences with men,” and wrote “Gebir,” his most elaborate and ambitious poem, which Southey took as a model in blank verse.

Among Landor’s correspondence in these closing years the following letters that passed between Kossuth and himself tell their own story of Landor’s sympathy with the cause of liberty.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

The letter from Kossuth to Landor is as follows :—

8, South Bank Regents Park,
London, March 24, 1856.

MY VENERABLE FRIEND, — Though I very gratefully appreciate the generosity of your intentions, still I must confess, that few things have ever affected me more painfully than to see from the Times of to-day, my private circumstances, the sacred domain of my life — thrust as an object of commiseration upon public discussion, a miserable subject of public sneers.

My head turns giddy at the very thought, and my resignation is scarcely able to overcome the shame, I don't know how I shall muster sufficient resolution to appear in public ever hereafter ; and I fear with all your good intentions, you shall have become the involuntary instrument for driving me out of England, before my time. I really scarcely can imagine what else I have to do, unless you devise some means for healing the wound.

I am poor, very poor ; but there was, I dare say, something honorable in that poverty, something sacred I would say. But seeing it made the object of a public appeal for commiseration, I

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

feel as if everything that was sacred to my position had undergone a profanation.

I repeat that I respect and appreciate the nobility of your impulses, but I regret that such a step should have been taken without my having an idea of its possibility.

I will say no more, but leave it with your prudence and discretion to mitigate the blow your kindness has inflicted on me. And remain with wonted esteem, only mingled with grief,

Yours very truly,

KOSSUTH.

TO WALTER SAVAGE LANDOR.

To which Landor replied : —

“It is impossible for me to rest until I have attempted to remove the vexation I have caused to the man I most venerate of any upon earth.

“My noble Kossuth ! ‘*The sacred domain of your life*’ is far more extensive than your measurement. Neither your house nor your banker’s are its confines. Do not imagine that the World is ignorant of your circumstances : it would be a crime to be indifferent to them. The Editor of the ‘Atlas’ in announcing that he had ‘*secured*’ your co-operation, published a

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

manifesto. I know nothing of this editor ; but, so long as you contributed to the paper, I was your humble subsidiary.

“ Consider how many men, wealthier than you and me, have accepted the offers of those who came forward to indemnify the persecuted for the demolition of their property. Ask yourself if Demosthenes or Milton, the two most illustrious defenders of liberty, by speech and pen, would have thrust aside the tribute which is due to such men alone. Would you dash out the signature of one who declares you his trustee for a legacy to your children? No, you would not. Neither will you reject the proofs of high esteem, however manifested, which England, however debased, is anxious to give.

“ Believe me ever sincerely
and affectionately yours,

“ W. S. LANDOR.”

The originals of these two letters (which Miss Kate Field had preserved among her MSS.) were given by her biographer¹ to the Boston Public Library, together with many autograph letters written to Miss Field herself by many of the

¹ Kate Field : A Record.



VIEW FROM THE GROUNDS OF VILLA LANDOR.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

famous people of the nineteenth century. Her own reminiscences of Landor, from which the foregoing transcripts have been freely drawn, were placed by her publishers at the disposal of the writer of this volume.

It was in the summer of 1859 that, owing to domestic difficulties, Mr. Landor left his beautiful villa on the hillside near Fiesole and came under the immediate care of Mr. Browning, who arranged for the aged poet to go for a time to a little apartment in Siena; but the Storys, who were then in *villeggiatura* in the quaint old mediæval city, invited him to their villa. "He made us a long visit," wrote Mrs. Story, "and was an honored and cherished guest. During the time he was with us his courtesy and high breeding never failed him; he was touchingly pleased and happy with our life, and so delightful and amusing that we ourselves grieved when it came to an end."

Later, the Brownings took the Villa Alberti, a little distance from the Storys, and a villina close to the Brownings was engaged for Mr. Landor, who would be seen astir in the early mornings writing Latin verses under the cypress trees. Mrs. Story's letters mention how frequently the

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

aged poet came to them, and she says: "His mention of Rose Aylmer—and he often mentioned her—always brought the tears to his eyes if not to ours; for there with her he had evidently buried his heart." And Mrs. Browning wrote of Landor to a friend, saying:—

"He has excellent, generous, affectionate impulses, but the impulses of the tiger every now and then. Nothing coheres in him, either in his opinions, or, I fear, his affections. It is n't age—he is precisely the man of his youth, I must believe. Still, his genius gives him the right to gratitude of all artists at least, and I must say that my Robert has generously paid the debt. Robert always said that he owed more as a writer to Landor than to any contemporary. At present Landor is very fond of him, but I am quite prepared for his turning against us as he has turned against Forster, who has been so devoted for years and years. Only one isn't kind for what one gets by it, or there wouldn't be much kindness in this world."

Landor's friendships, however, were for the most part very sincere and strong. The strangely trying domestic infelicities that he suffered evi-

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

dently left their trace on him, but in the main his noble nature always prevailed. He was a keen observer of character. Being asked at one time if he had ever seen Daniel Webster, Landor replied, "I once met Mr. Webster at a dinner-party. We sat next each other, and had a most agreeable conversation. Finally Mr. Webster asked me if I would have taken him for an American, and I answered, 'Yes, for the best of Americans!'"

For Southey his friendship was abounding, as it was for Lamb and Coleridge; and he gave to Keats an ardent appreciation. The remarkable quotation whose first line runs:—

"I strove with none; for none was worth my strife."

was written on the evening of his seventy-fifth birthday after the departure of his friends, Dickens and John Forster, who had passed the anniversary with him. He sent the stanza to Mr. Forster with a little note that ran:—

"My thanks were not spoken to you and Dickens for your journey of two hundred miles upon my birthday. Here they are, — not visible on the surface of the paper, nor on any surface whatever, but in the heart that is dictating this

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

letter. On the night you left me I wrote the following DYING SPEECH OF AN OLD PHILOSOPHER."

Then followed the stanza which is given in full at the opening of this chapter.

Curiously, it is said that although Shelley and Landor both lived in Paris at the same time, and each highly appreciated the other's poetry, they never met. Landor cared for Wordsworth, but said that he found in him "a sad deficiency of vital heat." His closest affinities were with the Latin poets, and of the modern, Shakespeare and Milton were his best-loved. Browning he cared for intensely, and Mrs. Browning's friendship cheered the lonely old man who had outlived all his early contemporaries, almost to the last. Browning's poetry puzzled him, although he was one of the earliest to recognize the genius of the author of "Pauline," while of Browning himself Landor wrote :—

"Since Chaucer was alive and hale,
No man hath walked along our roads with step,
So active, so inquiring eye, or tongue
So varied in discourse."

"I have always deeply regretted that I never met Shelley," said Landor to Miss Field. "It

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

was my own fault, for I was in Pisa the winter he resided there, and was told that Shelley desired to make my acquaintance. But I refused to make his, as at that time, I believed the disgraceful story related of him in connection with his first wife. Years after, when I called upon the second Mrs. Shelley, who, then a widow, was living out of London, I related to her what I had heard. She assured me that it was a most infamous falsehood, one of the many that had been maliciously circulated about her husband. I expressed my sorrow at not having been undeceived earlier, and assured her I never could forgive myself for crediting a slander that had prevented me from knowing Shelley. I was much pleased with Mrs. Shelley."

Landor's companionship was always inspiring to his friends. His profound and vast learning, his varied information, his wide acquaintance with celebrated persons, his ready wit and repartee rendered his conversation so rich and entertaining as to be an exceptional privilege.

In "Pericles and Aspasia," Cleone has written with Landor's pen, that "study is the bane of boyhood, the aliment of youth, the indulgence of manhood, and the restorative of old age." Of

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

this theory there could be no better example than Landor himself. That life which outlasted all the friends of its zenith was made rich by a constant devotion to the greatest works of the greatest men. Milton and Shakespeare were his constant companions, by night as well as by day. "I never tire of them," he would say; "they are always a revelation. And how grand is Milton's prose! quite as fine as his poetry!" He was said to be very fond of repeating the following celebrated lines that have the ring of truth:

"But when God commands to take the trumpet
And blow a dolorous or thrilling blast,
It rests not with man's will what he shall say
Or what he shall conceal."

"Was anything more harmonious ever written?" Landor would ask. "But Milton, you know, is old-fashioned. I believe I am old-fashioned. However, it is rather an honor to be classed thus, if one may keep such distinguished company." How devoted a student of Milton Landor was is evidenced in his delightful critical conversation between Southey and himself, wherein he declared, "Such stupendous genius, so much fancy, so much eloquence, so much

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

vigor of intellect never were united as in *Paradise Lost*."

In 1861 Landor sent to Kate Field the last lines he ever wrote, addressed to the English Homer, entitled

"MILTON IN ITALY.

"O Milton! couldst thou rise again, and see
The land thou lovedst in an earlier day!
See, springing from her tomb, fair Italy
(Fairer than ever) cast her shroud away,—
That tightly-fastened triply-folded shroud!
Around her, shameful sight! crowd upon crowd,
Nations in agony lie speechless down,
And Europe trembles at a despot's frown."

"We took many drives with Landor during the spring and summer of 1861, and made very delightful jaunts into the country," wrote Miss Field of one of his latest summers.

"Not forgetful in the least of things, the old man, in spite of his age, would always insist upon taking the front seat, and was more active than many a younger man in assisting us in and out of the carriage. 'You are the most genuinely polite man I know,' once wrote Lady Blessington to him. The verdict of 1840 could not have

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

been overruled twenty-one years later. Once we drove up to 'aerial Fiesole,' and never can I forget Landor's manner while in the neighborhood of his former home. It had been proposed that we should turn back when only half-way up the hill. 'Ah, go a little farther,' Landor said nervously; 'I should like to see my villa.' Of course his wish was our pleasure, and so the drive was continued. Landor sat immovable, with head turned in the direction of the Villa Gherardesca. At first sight of it he gave a sudden start, and genuine tears filled his eyes and coursed down his cheeks. 'There's where I lived,' he said, breaking a long silence and pointing to his old estate. Still we mounted the hill, and when at a turn in the road the villa stood out before us clearly and distinctly, Landor said, 'Let us give the horses a rest here!' We stopped, and for several minutes Landor's gaze was fixed upon the villa. 'There now, we can return to Florence, if you like,' he murmured, finally, with a deep sigh. 'I have seen it probably for the last time.' Hardly a word was spoken during the drive home. Landor seemed to be absent-minded. A sadder, more pathetic picture than he made during this memorable drive is rarely

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

seen. 'With me life has been a failure,' was the expression of that wretched, worn face. Those who believe Landor to have been devoid of heart should have seen him then."

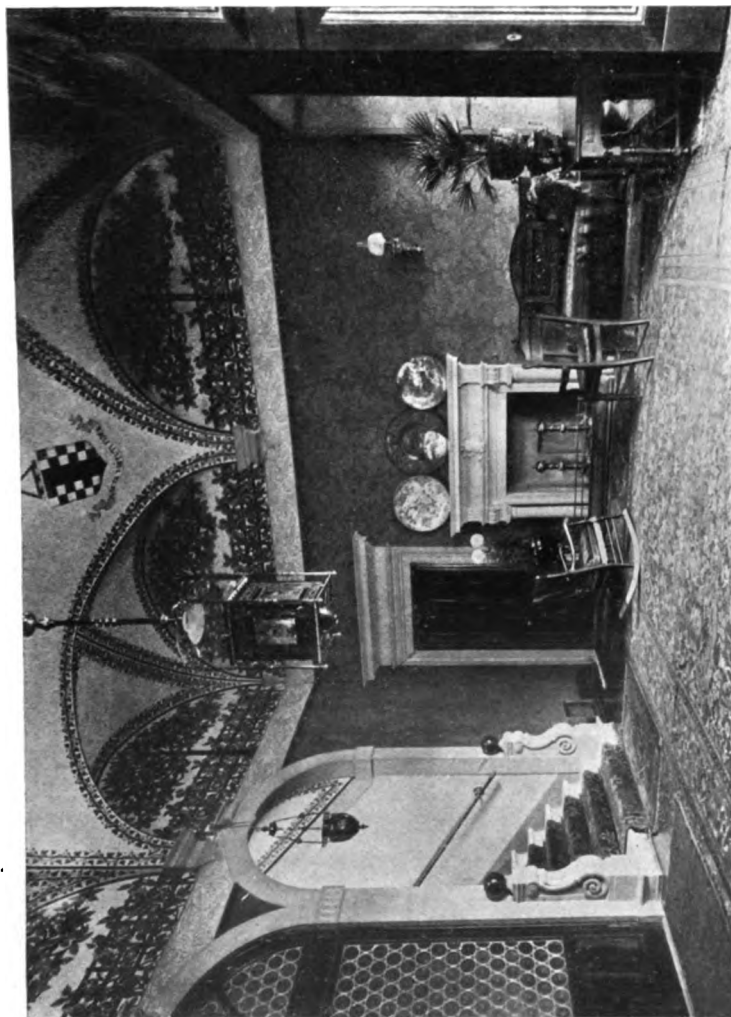
To the visitor in Florence, Villa Landor is still one of the objects of pilgrimage, and to its history since the death of the poet has been added a chapter of rich memories in its having been the home, for more than twenty years, of Prof. Daniel Willard Fiske, formerly of Cornell University. Professor Fiske restored the special features of the villa as it had been during Landor's day ; but while preserving its historic aspect, Professor Fiske fitted up the villa with every modern convenience, and furnished it with the most exquisite taste. It is a spacious dwelling, with lofty salons on three floors. Rich rugs, woven expressly to the order of Professor Fiske in Damascus ; rare carvings, inlaid mosaics, decorated ceilings, and every conceivable luxury of a beautiful home filled the rooms pervaded by the genius of Walter Savage Landor. For it was here that he had written those brilliant "Imaginary Conversations" and nearly all his poems. The dining-room, which was the scene of the famous fray

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

which terminated in Mr. Landor's throwing his cook out of the window, still has that violet bed beneath its windows, which the irascible poet feared he had injured, oblivious to any danger of a broken neck to his victim. Above the dining-room is the room that Landor used for his study — the windows framing another of those beautiful views that are enjoyed in every direction from Florence.

In one of the salons Professor Fiske had the portrait medallion head of Landor carved in stone over one of the mantelpieces. The choice books, many rare editions of beautiful folios, add distinction to the library. Every room held its enchantment in artistic interest. Professor Fiske was very hospitable, seldom being without guests under his roof. Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bailey Aldrich passed a part of one winter with him. Professor and Mrs. Goldwin Smith were his guests for some weeks, and many foreigners of distinction visited him. He was a reticent man, with a settled sadness of manner ; but when he was stimulated to his best by the congenial atmosphere of some group of near friends, his conversation was delightful.

By a curious coincidence, Professor Fiske died



ENTRANCE HALL, VILLA LANDOR.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

on the fortieth anniversary of Landor's death. To literature, Professor Fiske has rendered a great service in the collection of a specialist library of Dante, of Petrarcha, and of Icelandic literature. The Dante collection he had already presented to Cornell University ; that of the other two were placed in Florence, forming one of the most ideal of libraries, and one which, by the kind courtesy of Professor Fiske, it was the privilege of some tourists to visit. Professor Fiske domiciled this rare and exquisite collection in a noble apartment in a palace on the Via Lungo il Mugnone, facing the purple mountains. The spacious apartment was luxuriously fitted up with rich rugs, a great library-table, with every convenience and ornament; the walls of the room were lined with the books, running up to the Pompeian red frieze. Professor Fiske had two secretaries constantly in attendance — one an Italian for the Petrarcha collection, and a Dane (or Norwegian) for the Icelandic. It is a very rare and a very notable achievement to have brought together such a threefold collection as that of Professor Fiske, — an achievement that required not only the finest taste and the most liberal scholarship, but also the wealth to make possible such fulfilment of an ideal. Many who

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

might have the scholarly knowledge and the taste would be unable to command the required wealth ; others, more numerous, who might easily command the wealth, would be far from possessing the requisite knowledge and the literary taste inspiring such a work. It is a monument to elegant scholarship. The present collection is an evolutionary result, so to speak, of an idea that occurred to Professor Fiske in the spring of 1892, when, as he was searching for Petrarcha books in an old Italian shop, he chanced upon a copy of the "Divina Commedia" dated 1586, which he immediately purchased. For three years the professor continued his quest and his purchases.

"I not only wandered through the bookshops of all the larger and many of the smaller cities of Italy," he said, "but visited, more than once, the principal book marts of Great Britain, France, Belgium, Germany, Switzerland, and Austria, my journeys extending northward to Edinburgh and Stockholm. When not travelling or buying I was conning catalogues or corresponding with booksellers, publishers, and librarians in all the lands lying between Brazil and India, between Lisbon and St. Petersburg."

Curiously, the city that yielded him the larg-

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

est and most important results in Dantean literature was London, where Professor Fiske found a dealer who had accumulated a private Dante library. After London he found the most productive markets in Florence, Rome, Milan, Turin, and Paris. The scholarly quest seems to have abounded in pleasant incidents. "When I chanced in Perugia to inquire at a street book stall in relation to Dante," said Professor Fiske, 'an elderly bystander — whom I afterward grew to know as a delightful scholar and gentleman — turned to me, saying that he himself owned a small Dante collection, which he should take pleasure in showing me. Repairing with him to his home, I was taken to a little room, wherein were two or three presses filled with Dante literature, including nearly every opusculum concerning the poet which had been issued in Umbria or thereabouts, of most of which the various local librarians I had previously consulted had avowed their complete ignorance. Their possessor insisted upon my taking them all without payment, saying that his own little collection was of slight importance compared to the large one I was endeavoring to bring together. It was only on my positively declining to accept

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

his too liberal offer that he consented to let me send him in exchange other works on the same theme which he lacked."

This magnificent gift to Cornell must be a feature that will always attract students of Italian literature and poetry to that university, and enable it to hold a kind of perpetual festival of scholarship. Of the supreme power of Dante, Lowell well said: "Almost all the other poets have their seasons, but Dante penetrates to the moral core of those who once fairly come within his sphere, and possesses them wholly. His readers turn students, his students zealots, and what was a taste becomes a religion. If Shakespeare be the most comprehensive intellect, so Dante is the highest spiritual nature that has expressed itself in rhythmical form."

The atmosphere of scholarly culture and lofty aspiration with which Landor invested his home was revived by Daniel Willard Fiske during his tenure of the villa. Again was it pervaded by intellectual activities of a high order and by the social charm of lovely friends who lingered there. With this wealth of association and its romantic environment, Villa Landor will remain one of

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

the monuments of Florence, invested with a rich and varied interest.

Landor remained for some weeks as the guest of the Storys, and later in his little casa in Siena, until the late autumn days of 1859 called the Brownings back to Florence, and the Storys to Rome. He loved the strange mediæval town; for in Siena one feels that life of the fourteenth century when this city was the successful rival of Florence. It is an example of arrested development. Florence has progressed. Siena has stood still. Its narrow, dark streets, which seem like wells at the foot of the lofty stone buildings, are still traversed by white oxen and an occasional donkey cart. The streets are so steep that on most of them no horse could keep his footing on their stony pavement, and some of them, indeed, are more like stone staircases than streets.

Siena is a Tuscan town, about fifty miles from Florence, but the journey requires some five hours, as the Italian trains offer the maximum of delay and discomfort to the minimum of distance. It is a walled city with nine gates, and the city is absolutely limited to the space within the walls. It has never diffused itself into sub-

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

urbs, and outside the wall there is the unbroken stretch of country. It is located on the summits of three hills, and all the country roads lead up to the nine gates. The view from the citadel is unique in all Europe. One looks down on the surrounding country, while in the distance from eight to ten lines of mountain ranges are seen, one after another, each undulating horizon line growing fainter and fainter as it recedes. The ground is of a brown tint, from which the name of Siena brown. A soft haze of purples and the most delicate suggestion of rose and mauve form a transparent veil over the landscape, while castles, towers, convents, and campaniles diversify all the hillsides in this great sweep of country.

The civilization about Siena is very old, and the people are proud of their university (whose specialties are law and medicine) of the purity of Italian as spoken by Sieneſe ſcholars, and of the galleries where Sieneſe art can be ſtudied chronologically and in its completeness.

The home and haunts of Catharine of Siena form an object of pilgrimage. Catharine was born in 1347 and died in 1380. Her father was a dyer, and their home and the ſhop were in the Contrado d'Oca, a depressed diſtrict of poor

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

people. The house and shop stand to-day as they stood during her lifetime, and over the door is written in gold letters, "Sposae Christi Catharine Domus." On the adjoining hill stands the vast church of St. Dominico, in the chapel of which Catharine prayed and saw visions.

"Catharine of Siena was to the fourteenth century what St. Bernard was to the twelfth,—the light and support of the Church. At the moment when the bark of St. Peter was most strongly agitated by the tempest, God gave it for pilot a poor young girl who was concealing herself in the little shop of a dyer. Catharine travelled to France to lead the Pontiff Gregory XI. away from the delights of his native land; she brought back the Popes to Rome, the real centre of Christianity. She addressed herself to cardinals, princes, and kings. . . . By the power of her eloquence and the ardor of her piety she succeeded as a mediator between Florence and her native city, and between Florence and the Pope. . . . Like St. Francis, St. Bernard, and Savonarola, Catharine became the fearless monitor of the Church and a prophet to it of warning and rebuke."

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

The impressiveness of all this scenery of her life cannot be imagined until one is in the midst of it. The house where she lived has been bereft of much of its interest by the converting of all its rooms into chapels which are not distinctive ; but there is still shown the little cell where she slept, — a tiny recess in the wall with a stone floor on which she lay, refusing comfort or warmth, and it is related that she always continued in prayer until the matin sounded from St. Dominico, in order that the district in which she lived might never be without its devotions ascending to God. There are shown certain relics, — the lantern she carried when on her ministering errands at night about Siena ; the cap she wore, and her prayer, printed on slips that the tourist may buy.

The Church of St. Dominico is one of the most curious of the old mediæval structures. It dates back to the twelfth century, and has apparently been very little altered since that time. It is perfectly bare in its interior, nor are the chapels particularly rich, although there are a few paintings and pieces of sculptures that are worth seeing. The little chapel where Catharine held her protracted vigils is kept in semi-privacy,

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

and one enters by special permission only. On the stone floor there is a red heart inlaid with the inscription that on that spot Christ changed the heart of Catharine. Over the door of this chapel is inscribed :

*“ Haec tenet ara caput Catharinae ; corda respiris ?
Haec inno Christus pectore clausa tenet.”*

Practically the church is unchanged, and one wanders through its vast and rather gloomy interior ; lingers in the chapel where Catharine saw visions and dreamed dreams, and where her head is preserved in a silver reliquary, while her body is entombed in Rome. It is related that when she was six years old she saw a vision of Jesus in the golden clouds of the evening, and that He smiled upon her, extending his hands in blessing. At another time in her childhood she longed to go to the desert, and she actually left the city and found a grotto in a hill, where, she said, God came to her and told her she had another work in life to do than that of seeking solitude, and that she must return to her father's house. At another time she said that the Lord thus counselled her when she had desired to seclude herself from men : —

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

“Be calm, my child ; thou must accomplish all justice that my grace may become fruitful in thee and in others. I desire not that thou shouldst be separated from me ; on the contrary, I desire that thou shouldst become more closely united to me by charity toward thy fellow-creatures. Thou knowest that love has two commandments, to love me, and to love thy neighbor. I desire that thou shouldst walk, not on one, but on two feet, and fly to heaven on two wings.”

This counsel is well worth remembering in its breadth of application to life.

Siena is the one place in which to study the great frescoes of Sodoma. In the Palazza Pubblico one finds his figures of St. Ansano and St. Vittorio, San Bernardo, the Holy Family, and other of his most important works.

Once a year, on St. Catharine's day, which all Siena regards as a “festa,” celebrating with processions and banners and high mass, the head of Catharine is exhibited to the people. The story of Catharine's miraculous life is too authentic in history to admit of doubt. John Addington Symonds says of her : “She walked surrounded

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

by a spiritual world, environed by angels. Her habits were calculated to foster this disposition. She took little sleep; she ate nothing but vegetables and the sacred wafer of the host, entirely abjuring wine and meat. This diet depressed the physical forces and exalted the nervous system. Thoughts became things, and ideas were projected from her vivid fancy upon the empty air about her."

In the light of modern psychical research, however, it is certainly conceivable that this depletion of the physical and exaltation of the nervous system may, instead of producing hallucination, have produced receptivity instead; that it may have permitted her to see what truly existed, but that to which ordinary life is blind. The world of the unseen is as real — is far more real, indeed — than the world of the seen. It is a realm where everything is in a state of higher vibration, and is thus only visible to the most sensitive and exalted conditions. All these wonderful and mystic legends and history regarding Catharine of Siena seem not unlinked with the facts and results that invest psychic research in the present day.

One of the most interesting places in Italy

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

is this Tuscan town of Siena. The interior of the cathedral is all in black and white, with curious effects of interarching and some of the finest wood carvings in the entire world.

Siena is a living page out of history, and, after Rome, Venice, and Florence, there is no question but that Siena is the most important city in Italy for the visitor to study.

The journey between Florence and Siena has perpetual change and charm. The hills are crowned with castles, towers, convents, and campaniles which silhouette themselves against the sky, and the wooded valleys are full of winding roadways and mysterious lights; the horizon shows sometimes eight or ten undulating lines of mountain ranges ending in a line of snow, with the most delicate play of colors in the foreground,—purple and rose and pale greens,—while the old gray stone houses, often fortified just as they stood six hundred years ago, are surrounded by the silvery hue of the gray-green olive orchards, and defined by the tall, solemn cypress trees that stand like grim sentinels.

To what degree Siena impressed Landor is not recorded in any of his writings. Doubtless he

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

had before visited the old city ; but at this time — in his extreme old age — it was his friends and his literary work that engaged his interest. The composition of a Latin verse enlisted his attention far more deeply than art, myth, or legend. The scenery of memory absorbed him rather than that of the outer world.

On their return to Florence, Mr. Browning established Landor in a little casa (number 2671) in the Via Nunziatina near the Church of the Carmine and also near Casa Guidi. The little street, whose name has now been changed, is in one of the most picturesque parts of Florence, and its high antique buildings hold always a nameless charm for the visitor. Mrs. Browning's own maid, Wilson, who had married an Italian, was placed in charge of Landor's household, and with his books about him, reading *Odyssey* in the original and happy in acquiring new pictures by Domenichino and Poussin, — problematic as was their genuineness, — Landor passed his time with his books and his thoughts. "Nothing," he wrote in a letter to John Forster about this time, "can exceed Mr. Browning's continued kindness. Life would be almost worth keeping for that recollection alone."

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

And Browning wrote of Landor to Mr. Forster:—

“At present Landor’s conduct is faultless. His wants are so moderate, his evenness of temper so remarkable, his gentleness and readiness to be advised so exemplary, that it all seems *too good*; as if some rock must lurk under such smooth water. His thankfulness for the least attention, and anxiety to return it, are almost affecting under all circumstances. He leads a life of the utmost simplicity.”

The Brownings had arranged to pass this winter of 1859–60, in Rome, and Mr. Browning spoke to friends of his regret in this absence from the wonderful old man, whose gentle courtesy and benignancy increased during their closer intercourse. They often walked for two hours together in rambles about Florence. “He writes Latin verses,” says Browning of him; “few English, but a few; and just before we left Siena an imaginary conversation suggested by something one of us had said about the possible re-appearance of the body after death. He looks better than ever by the amplitude of a capital beard, most becoming, we all judge it.” “If

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

you could only see how well he looks in his curly white beard!" Mrs. Browning wrote in a letter to England.

Mr. Burne-Jones and Mr. Val Prinsep were in Rome also that season carrying a letter of introduction to the Brownings from Rossetti, and the Brownings also met and knew Cardinal (then Dr.) Manning, in Rome that winter. "We left Mr. Landor in great comfort," Mrs. Browning writes from Rome to a friend. "I went to see his apartment before it was furnished. Rooms small, but with a lookout into a little garden; quiet and cheerful. . . . His genius gives him the right of gratitude on the part of all artists at least."

The rooms all opened into each other, and in the sitting-room Landor was usually to be found, "sitting in a large arm-chair, surrounded by paintings, which he declared he could not live without (all of them very bad for the most part, excepting one genuine small Salvator), his hair snowy white and his beard of patriarchal proportions, his gray eyes still keen and clear, his grand head not unlike Michael Angelo's Moses, and at his feet a pretty little Pomeranian dog called Gaillo, the gift of Mr. William Story."

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

In the following June the Brownings returned from Rome, and of Landor Mr. Browning says :

“ I find him very well, satisfied on the whole, busy with verse-making, and particularly delighted at the acquisition of three execrable daubs by Domenichino and Gaspar Poussin, most benevolently battered by time. He has a beautiful beard, foam-white and soft. He reads the *Odyssey* in the original with extraordinary ease. When he alludes to that other matter, it is clear that he is, from whatever peculiarity, quite impervious to reasoning or common-sense. He cannot in the least understand that he is at all wrong, or injudicious, or unwary, or unfortunate in anything, but in the being prevented by you from doubling and quadrupling the offence. He spent the evening here the night before last. Whatever he may profess, the thing he really loves is a pretty girl to talk nonsense with ; and he finds comfort in American visitors, who hold him in proper respect.”

The twilight deepened. His faithful friend, Mr. Kirkup continued to visit him. Algernon Charles Swinburne came to Florence to pay his tribute to England's oldest living poet, and later

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

he wrote the beautiful lyric which forever links the names of those who were at the time, —

“The youngest and the oldest singer
That England bore.”

Mrs. Browning died in June of 1861, leaving as the last thing she had touched, a half finished letter to Mme. Mario “full of noble words about Italy.” The death of Cavour had deeply affected her. Mr. Browning left Italy, never to return. “You cannot imagine how I miss him,”¹ wrote Mr. Story to Prof. Charles Eliot Norton. “For three years now we have always been together; all the long summer evenings of these last summers in Siena we sat on our terrace night after night, talking, or we played and sang together. All the last winters he worked with me daily for three hours in my studio; and we met, either at my house, or his, or at that of some friend, nearly every evening. There is no one to supply his place. . . . No one with whom I can sympathize on all points as with him, no one with whom I can walk any of the higher ranges of art and philosophy. Mrs. Browning is a great loss to literature

¹ William Wetmore Story : And His Friends. Boston : Houghton, Mifflin and Co.

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

—the greatest poet among women. What energy and fire there was in that little frame. Never did I see any one, whom the world hastened to crown, who had so little vanity and so much pure humility.”

Isa Blagden went with Mr. Browning to England, where she was to have had a villa near Miss Cobbe ; but in the end she returns to Bellosguardo and is one of the narrowing circle to cheer Landor’s latest days.

During the last year of his life he collected and revised his poems that appear in the volume entitled “Heroic Idylls,” to which he prefixed a preface that runs :—

“He who is within two paces of the ninetieth year may sit down and make no excuses ; he must be unpopular, he never tried to be much otherwise, he never contended with a contemporary, but walked alone on the far eastern uplands, meditating and remembering.”

The Florence on which Landor closed his eyes was the Florence of the Past and also of the Present. Not one charm of all its dead centuries has it ever lost. The spell of enchantment that brooded over the eleventh century still invests



MONUMENT TO DANTE ALIGHIERI, BY RICCI.

Santa Croce, Florence.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

the twentieth century. The ages only glorify this City Beautiful.

The narrow, winding streets with their arcades, their overhanging loggias, the glow of color in niches and arch that surprises the eye, are thronged with invisible forms, and the irregular stone pavements echo to the tread of invisible footsteps. Every turn is invested with poetic legend; every hour is filled with beauty. A morning atmosphere, clear as crystal, reveals the mountain ranges in tints of rose, purple, and azure, veined with colors that sparkle and change before the gaze like the flash of jewels. Again a wraith-like haze veils valley and mountains in the softest blue air, that half reveals and half conceals the towers and the ancient walls. Looking out on these and on the old church of the Carmine, Landor might have said with Dante :

“ I lift mine eyes and all the windows blaze
With forms of Saints and holy men who died
Here martyred and hereafter glorified :
And the great Rose upon its leaves displays
Christ's triumph, and the angelic roundelays
With splendor upon splendor multiplied ;
And Beatrice again at Dante's side
No more rebukes, but smiles her words of praise ;
And then the organ sounds, and unseen choirs

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

Sing the old Latin hymns of peace and love
And benedictions of the Holy Christ ;
And the melodious bells among the spires
O'er all the housetops and through Heaven above
Proclaim the elevation of the Host ! ”

During all the last dozen years or more of Landor's life he seemed to constantly anticipate death. As early as in 1857 when he arranged that collection of his poems that appears under the title of “Dry Sticks,” he insisted on placing his name on the title-page as “the late” W. S. Landor. His publisher, Mr. Nichol of Edinburgh wrote to him saying :—

“I take the liberty of begging you to allow me to make the title stand thus ; ‘Dry Sticks Faggoted by W. S. Landor,’ and not, as you still continue to write it, *the late* W. S. Landor. It will sufficiently pain many when in God's good time you will be spoken of as ‘the late’ ; and I think the expression would jar on the ear of all your friends as it does on mine.”

About that time Landor wrote to John Forster :—

“Why cannot this swimming of the head carry me to the grave a little more rapidly ?

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

This is the only thing I now desire. I remember faces and places, but their names I totally forget. Verses of the *Odyssey* and the *Iliad*, run perpetually in my mind, after the better part of a century, and there seems to be no room for anything else."

In his Ode to Southey, written at an earlier period than this, Landor had said :—

" We hurry to the river we must cross,
And swifter downward every footstep wends ;
Happy who reach it ere they count the loss
Of half their faculties and half their friends ! "

The student of Landor cannot but note with some amusement, irreverent though it may seem, his habit of writing epitaphs for himself. The following Latin stanza is one of these :—

" Ut sine censurâ, sine laude inscripta, sepulcro
Sint patris ac matris nomina sola meo :
At pura invidiæ, sua gloria rara, poetæ
Incumbente rosâ laurus obumbret humum."

This half-poetic, half-melancholy attitude toward death was, however, in the very spirit of the age in which Landor lived. Mrs. Browning and other persons of exceptional development spiritually, escaped this tendency of the day to

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

contemplate death in its mere physical aspect. The one grave defect running through the character of Landor, or, as 'it might better be said, the one serious misfortune of his life, was his inability to so comprehend the true nature of life as to see death in its just relation — merely one event in evolutionary progress. Religion as well as science is progressive in that each continually grasps larger truth; and the closing years of the nineteenth century brought to bear on human life a wonderful quickening of perception regarding spiritual truth, and the power to receive anew, and realize with a far deeper significance, the revelation and the teachings of Jesus, the Christ.

The twilight deepened into dusk. It was, indeed, the twilight of the gods. The old man was but groping his way through the gathering shadows. All his old friends save Mr. Kirkup who continued to visit him, had vanished. Those whose footsteps had been, with his own, bathed in the dew of Parnassus, were all gone. Mr. Browning made constant friendly inquiries, but he could never look again upon Florence now that his "star," — the star that "opened its soul" to him, had vanished from earthly gaze. But Landor had his poems and his thoughts. His

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

favorite classics were about him. On one night not long before his death the old man rang for his attendant about two o'clock in the morning, and insisted upon having the room lighted and the windows thrown open. He then asked for a pen ; he wrote a few lines of poetry, then, leaning back, said, " I shall never write again. Put out the lights and draw the curtains."

On the seventeenth of September, 1864, Landor was released from the worn-out physical body and entered on the life radiant amid that loveliness which eye hath not seen nor ear heard, nor hath it entered into the heart of man to conceive of its glory.

" A night of memories and of sighs "

And then the dawn of the Immortal Day.

In the literary Valhalla Landor's fame rests secure. The defect of his work is its lack of spiritual confidence. He had failed to lay hold on immortality with that abounding faith and exquisite certainty of recognition which imparts to life the glow and energy of achievement, and the joy that no man taketh from another. In this defect he did not rise above the general environment of his age as those more spiritually developed were

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

enabled to do, in ascending into the more joyous ethereal atmosphere. This was the misfortune of temperament rather than the fault of conscious intention. This loftier development of his noble intellectual powers awaited him farther on in the eternal progress. John Forster, his biographer, admirably sums up Landor's life when he says:—

“To the end we see him as it were unconquerable. He keeps an unquailing aspect to the very close. But he is only unvanquished; he is not the victor. . . . Greatness there was always; a something of the heroic element which lifted him, in nearly all that he said and very much that he did, considerably above ordinary stature; but never to be admitted or described without important drawbacks. What was wanting most, in his books and his life alike, was the submission to some kind of law. . . . But though he would not accept those rules of obedience without which no man can wisely govern either himself or others; and though he lived far beyond the allotted term of life without discovering that all the world is wiser than any one man in the world; his genius was yet in itself so commanding and consummate

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

as to bring into play the nobler part of his character only, and by this his influence will remain over others. . . . To refuse the recognition of any strength but one's own . . . and to rest all claim to magnanimity and honor on self-assertion rather than self-denial, cannot but be a grave fault in the conduct of life in modern times ; but shift it back into classic ages, and the heroes of Greece and Rome take visible shape once more."

This last statement contains the key-note to Landor's character. He was essentially of classic mould ; and his virtues and his defects were those seen in such high relief in any study of the Golden Age of Greece.

A man, however, is entitled to be judged by his noblest moments. Landor's entire character was of the heroic quality. His liberal sympathies, his hatred of all tyranny and oppression, and his great tenderness of nature must endear him to all who appreciate the majesty of his genius as revealed in his work.

In the little English cemetery, consecrated by the tomb of Elizabeth Barrett Browning whose earthly form was laid away in the marble designed by her friend, Sir Frederick Leighton ;

THE FLORENCE OF LANDOR

near the graves of Isa Blagden, the Trollopes, and Theodore Parker, was the body of Landor laid.

“O, the little birds sang east, and the little birds sang west.

Toll slowly.

And I smiled to think God's greatness flowed around our incompleteness,—

Round our restlessness, His rest.”

The beautiful little English cemetery just outside the old walls of Florence will forever remain a shrine of poetic pilgrimage. A double line of the dark cypress trees motionless as statues, surround the spot; the encircling mountain lines tower above it from the near horizon and the golden Italian sunshine shimmers into a thousand opalescent lights and shadows over the tombs whose names suggest so much of the poetic vitality of the nineteenth century. The flat entablature of marble laid on Landor's grave bears only his name and the two dates—1775–1864—within whose limits the story of his life on earth was comprised, the most beautiful chapters of which were set in the scenic enchantment of the Flower of all Cities and City of all Flowers.

THE TWILIGHT OF THE GODS

The Twilight of the Gods had faded into the
Immortal Dawn of the Glory Everlasting.

“And thou, his Florence, to thy trust
Receive and keep,
Keep safe his dedicated dust,
His sacred sleep.

“So shall thy lovers, come from far,
Mix with thy name
As morning-star with evening-star
His faultless fame.”

INDEX

INDEX

ABLETT, Mr., 42, 43.
Academe, 59.
Academy, Platonic, 92, 158, 160.
Acciajuolo, Bishop Angelo, tomb of, 185.
Acciajuolo, Niccolo, founder of the Certosa, 73, 183.
Acropolis, the, of Pæsulæ, 254.
"Adam and Eve," Dürer's painting of, 171.
"Adoration, The," 170.
Affrico, 50.
Ajax, 90.
Albany, Duchess of, 183.
Alberti, Leo Battista, 58.
Alcott, Amos Bronson, 137.
Aldrich, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Bailey, 290.
Alexander, 54.
Alfieri, 239, 240.
"Alfieri and Salomon," in Imaginary Conversations, 241, 255.
"Allegory, An," picture in Pitti Palace, 169.
Amici, Professor, 55.
"Andrea of Hungary," 213, 237.
"Annunciation, The," 171.
Aquinas, St. Thomas, 165.
Arezzo, 79, 81.
Aristotle, 92.
Assisi, 197.
"Assumption, The," by Andrea del Sarto, 170.
"Aurora Leigh," 99; Landor's praises of, 191, 196.

Aylmer, John, Bishop of London, 206.
Aylmer, Lady, 206.
Aylmer, Rose Whitworth, 201; Landor's meeting with, 201; impressions of, 202; charm of lyric on, 205; life of, 206; hair of, treasured by Landor, 207; journey to India, of, 209, 210; death of, 210; memories of, 211, 231.
BAGNI di Lucca, 196.
Bandini, Bernardo, 177.
Barberini, Cardinal Francesco, 150.
Bartolommeo, Fra, 169, 173; portrait of Savonarola, by, 165.
"Beatrice Cenci," 137.
Bell, John, 87.
Bellosguardo, Heights of, 42, 74, 99, 174.
Benedictine order, the, 70.
Bicci, Giovanni di, 176.
Blagden, Isa, 24, 106, 136, 138, 306, 316; letters of Mrs. Browning to, 131.
Blessington, Lady, 24, 38, 46, 47, 48, 264, 265, 266, 287.
Blessington, Lord, 47.
Boboli Gardens, the, 103.
Boccaccio, 25, 49, 50, 114, 225, 226; appreciation of Landor for, 229.
Boleyn, Anne, 225.

INDEX

- Bonnat, Léon, 175.
 Botticelli, 67, 168, 169.
 Borgia, Lucrezia, 28.
 Brown, Charles Armitage, 50, 112.
 Browning, Elizabeth Barrett, 90, 119, 120, 121, 131, 133, 136; Countess d'Ossoli characterized by, 127, 128; letters of, to Kate Field, 134, 135; "Pentameron," praised by, 249; Lander praised by, 282; death of, 198; tomb of, 315.
 Browning, Robert, 90, 119, 136, 195, 198, 263, 303, 304, 312; influence of, on Lander, 189; dedication of "Luria" to Lander, 190.
 Browning, Sarianna, 90.
 Brownings, the, 24, 47, 79, 105, 157, 196, 197, 259, 281.
 Buonaventuri, Pietro, 12.
 Burne-Jones, Sir Edward, 305.
 Brunelleschi, 23, 83, 166, 167, 179.
 Bryant, William Cullen, visit of, to Florence, 106.
 Byron, Lord, his assaults on Southey, 29.
 CAESARS, the, palace of, 149.
 Campagna, the, 149.
 Campanile, the, 9.
 Canova, 149, 152.
 Capello, Bianca, 12.
 Careggi, 69.
 Carlyle, Thomas, 58.
 Cascine, the, 181.
 Casa Bello, 106, 107, 108.
 Casa Guidi, 105, 107, 129, 140, 195, 262, 263, 303.
 Castle San Angelo, 151.
 Catania, University of, 132.
 Catharine of Siena, 296, 297, 298, 299, 300, 301.
 Catullus, 250.
 Cavour, Count, 22, 249.
 Cellini, Benvenuto, 90, 168.
 "Cenacolo, The" by Andrea del Sarto, 62.
 Certosa, Convent of, 73, 183, 184.
 Charles VIII. of France, 179.
 Chaterjii, Mohini, 17.
 Chavannes, Puvis de, 175.
 Chesterfield, Lord, 55, 229.
 Christine of Lorraine, 13.
 Church of San Alessandro, 254; Carmine, 303; Santa Croce, 71, 72, 180, 181, 183; St. Dominico, 297, 298; San Francesco di Paola, 74, 186; San Lorenzo, 64, 175, 176; San Miniato, 43, 64, 69, 72; Santa Maria Novella, 19, 194, 195; San Martino a Mensola, 62, 63; St. Peter's, 149; San Spirito, 53, 64, 174, 180.
 Cicero, 254.
 Cimabue, 69, 194.
 City of the Leaning Tower, the, 3.
 Clement VII., 177.
 Clement, XIII., tomb of, 149.
 "Cleopatra." Guido's picture of, 170; William Wetmore Story's poem, 156; his statue of, 151.
 Coates, Florence Earle, quoted, 204.
 Cobbe, Frances Power, 24; visit of to Florence, 131; brilliant circle of, 136.
 Coleman, Charles Caryll, portrait of Lander by, 259.
 "Conspiracy of Catullus," picture by Salvator Rosa, 170.
 "Conversation between Galileo, Milton, and a Dominican," 239.
 "Conversations in a Studio," 157.

INDEX

- Cook, Henrietta, sister of Mrs. Browning, 135.
 Copernican system, the, of Galileo, 14.
 Cornwall, Barry, 189.
 Corson, Dr. Hiram, quoted, 145.
 Cosimo il Vecchio, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 26, 86, 93, 177.
 Cosimo, Piero di, 75.
 "Count Julian," 28, 33.
 Cranch, Mr. and Mrs. Christopher Pearse, 193.
 Cushman, Charlotte, 157.

 DALL' Ongaro, Francesco, 136.
 "Dance of the Pleiades, The," 154.
 Dante, 19, 20, 108, 113, 182, 291, 309; Mr. Kirkup's manuscript poems of, 110; death-mask of, 110; fresco portrait of, 110; monument to, 180.
 "Dante and Beatrice," in "Imaginary Conversations," 241.
 "Dancing Mercury, The," of Giovanni da Bologna, 194.
 "David," Michael Angelo's statue of, 72; Donatello's statue of, 194.
 Da Vinci, Leonardo, 175.
 "Death of Clytemnestra, The," 236.
 "Decameron, The," 225.
 De Quincey, Thomas, 33.
 De Vere, Aubrey, quoted by Landor, 267 *et seq.*
 Dickens, Charles, 190, 283; Forster's allusion to letter of, 124, 125; Landor's words on, 214.
 "Divine Comedy, The," 115.
 Dolci, Carlo, 168.
 Donatello, work of, 91, 176.
 Dowden, Edward, 246.

 "Dry Sticks," 310.
 Dudley, Sir Robert, palace of, 10, 16; arrival in Florence of, 11; reception of, by Cosimo II., 13; death of, 15; burial-place of, 15.
 Duomo, the, Hawthorne's words on, 107.
 Dupré, Giovanni, 176, 181.

 EAMES, Emma (*see* Story).
 "Ecce Homo," painting by Fra Bartolommeo, 170.
 Eldridge, Emeline (*see* Story).
 Eleanora, Duchess of Toledo, 168; portrait of, 172.
 Eliot, George (*pseud.* Mary Ann Evans Cross), 24, 90; impressions of Fiesole, 83; visits Trollope, 84; art criticisms of, 90; quoted, 8, 26, 97, 98; Palazzo Pitti characterized by, 167.
 Elizabeth, Queen, 11.
 "Elizabeth and Burleigh" in "Imaginary Conversations," 237.
 Emerson, Ralph Waldo, 24, 47; 238, 253; Duomo praised by, 57; letter of to Landor, 57; his meeting with Landor, 53, 54, 55, 238, 253.
 Esti, Leonora di, 240.
 "Estrangement," 156.
 Everett, Edward, Story's statue of, 155.
 "Examination of William Shakespeare for Deer-Stealing," 48.

 "FATES Gathering in the Stars, The," 154.
 Ferdinand, King of Naples, 178.
 Ferrucci, Francesco, 10, 12, 13.
 Festival of Corpus Domini, 195.

INDEX

- Field, Eliza, *née* Riddle (Mrs. Joseph M.), 135.
- Field, Kate, 24, 30, 35, 284; letters to, 134; quotations from, 188, 207, 259, 262, 276, 277; letter of Landor to, 274; manuscripts of, 280.
- Fiesole, 3, 25, 68.
- Fiske, Professor Daniel Willard, restoration of Villa Landor by, 289; hospitality of, 290; conversation of, 290; Dante and Petrarca collections of, 291, 292, 293; gift of, to Cornell, 294; scholarly culture of, 294, 295; death of, 291.
- Florence, Trollope's History of, 138.
- Forster, John, 129, 283, 284; "The Pentameron" characterized by, 114; lyric of Landor's appreciated by, 205; quotations from, 237, 238, 251, 252, 253; Landor's life appraised by, 314, 315.
- Fra Angelico, San Marco immortalized by, 23; ineffable beauty of works of, 160.
- Franklin, Benjamin, 240.
- Fra Girolamo, 164.
- French Revolution, the, 35.
- Fuller, Margaret, Countess d'Ossoli (*see* Ossoli).
- GALILEO, 14, 26, 241; called to Florence by Cosimo, 13; traditions of, 42; tower of, 64; Herschel's appreciation of, 67.
- Garibaldi, 249; tablet to, 183.
- "Gebir," 28, 31, 32, 277.
- Ghirlandajo, 23.
- Gibson, John, his bust of Landor, 280.
- "Ginevra," Da Vinci's picture of, 171.
- Giotto, 69, 181; tower of, 83.
- "Girlhood of Catherine de' Medici, The," 138.
- Giulio, Cardinal, 62.
- Giovanna di Napoli, 236.
- Giovanni da Bologna, 56.
- Giovanna, Prince, 12.
- Goddi, grand staircase of, in the Bargello, 193.
- Graves-Sawle, Lady, *née* Paynter, 211, 215; portrait of, 206, 209; marriage of, 214; golden wedding of, 216, 217.
- Greenough, Horatio, 47, 53, 54.
- Gregory IX., Pope, 181.
- Gualberto, Giovanni, miracle appears to, 70; crucifix of, 72; relics of, 78.
- HALLAM, Henry, 59.
- Hardy, Thomas, 85.
- Hare, Francis, 24, 31, 46.
- Hare, Julius, 24, 31, 46, 130.
- Hawthorne, Julian, letter of, 111, 112.
- Hawthorne, Nathaniel, 24, 99, 105, 106, 107, 108, 157; art impressions of, 89; Mr. Story's statue of Cleopatra interpreted by, 151; Bellosguardo described by, 187.
- Hazlitt, William, 112.
- "He and She, a Poet's Portfolio," 156.
- "Heroic Idylls," 275, 308.
- Herschel, Sir John, 56, 67.
- Hillard, George S., Browning's conversation described by, 140.
- "Holy Family, The," Raphael's picture of, 170; Andrea del Sarto's picture of, 172.

INDEX

Homer, Landor's veneration of, 231, 275.

Horace, 52, 240, 271.

Hosmer, Harriet, characterization of by Miss Cobbe, 137.

Hutton, R. H., George Eliot's letter to, 85.

Hunt, Leigh, 24, 25, 42, 46, 50, 51, 52, 112, 189.

"IANTHE," 207, 208.

"Idler in France, The," 266.

"Idler in Italy, The," 266.

"Imaginary Conversations," 28, 31, 32, 53, 57, 98, 99, 221, 222, 240, 289.

"Infant Bacchus, The," 155.

"Italian Note Books, The," 99.

Inglis, Sir Robert Harry, 130.

JAMES, Henry, 192.

Jameson, Mrs. Anna, 24, 62, 70, 140.

"Jane Eyre," 195.

Janiculum, the, 151.

Jarves, James Jackson, 157.

"Jerusalem in Her Desolation," Mr. Story's sculpture of, 155.

John of Bologna, 55.

"Judith and Holofernes," the, of Donatello, 91.

Julius II., Pope, Raphael's portrait of, 170.

KRATS, John, 78, 239.

Kenilworth, 16.

Kenyon, Frederick, 131.

Kenyon, John, 24, 46, 79; Forster's characterization of 129.

Kinney, Mrs. Elizabeth Coates, 123.

Kirkup, Seymour, 24, 108, 117, 216, 306, 312; Hawthorne's de-

scription of, 109; antique collections of, 110, 111; reminiscences of, 115, 116.

Kossuth, Louis, 125, 249; letter of, to Landor, 278, 279.

"LA BEATA," 138.

"La Bella," 172.

"La Donna Velata," 170, 172.

Lamb, Charles, 249.

Landino, 26, 58.

Landor, Julia, *née* Thuillier (Mrs. Walter Savage Landor), 116.

Landor, Walter Savage, 3, 4, 5, 23, 25, 27, 28, 29, 30; birth of, 31; parentage of, 31, 34; Spain visited by, 36, 38; villa acquired by, 42; allusion of Emerson to, 56; marriage of, 116; Southey overrated by, 57, 113, 136, 158, 159; art worship of, 188; Browning praised by, 190, 191; Rose Aylmer met by, 201, 202, 203, 221, 222; art criticism of, 232; worship of for Shakespeare, 235; poverty of, 244; Kate Field's characterization of, 246, 247, 253, 255, 256, 259, 275; poetic appreciations of, 277; letter of to Kossuth, 279, 280; visit of to the Storys, 281, 282; Mrs. Browning's poems praised by, 284; medallion head of, 290; letter of to Forster, 310; death of 313; grave of, 316.

Lang, Andrew, 209.

"Last Fruit," 263.

Laurentian Library, the, 85, 86.

Leader, Temple, 61.

Leighton, Sir Frederick, 24, 315.

"Lenore," 206.

Lewes, George Henry, 24, 84.

INDEX

- Lippi, Filippo, 176.
 Loggia de' Lansì, 90.
 Longfellow, Henry Wadsworth, 49.
 Lorenzo *il Magnifico*, 90, 96, 86, 256; villa of, 58; death of, 9, 93; legend of, 95; incident of, in gardens of San Marco, 161.
 Lowell, James Russell, 151, 195; words of, on Dante, 294.
 Luca della Robbia, important work of, 74.
 Lytton, Lord, (*pseud.*, Owen Meredith), 196.
- MACHIAVELLI, Bernardo, 49, 51, 61, 183.
 "Madonna Addolorata," 181.
 "Madonna del Baldacchino," the, 173.
 "Madonna dell' Impruneta," shrine of, 73.
 "Madonna of the Roses," 168.
 "Madonna della Seggiola," 170, 173.
 "Magdalen, The," Perugino's picture of 171.
 Magliabichiana Library, 85.
 "Malesherbes" in "Imaginary Conversations," 223, 224, 225.
 Manning, Rev. Dr., afterward Cardinal, 305.
 "Marble Faun, The," 151, 152.
 Maria Maddalena, 15.
 Marie, Queen of Henri IV. of France, 12.
 "Marriage of St. Catherine, The," 170, 172.
 Marsh, George P., 140.
 Massinger, Philip, 54.
 Maximi, Giuseppe, tablet to, 183; Landor's admiration for, 249.
 Medea, statue of, 155.
- Medici, Anna Maria, de', 175.
 Medici, Cosimo de', 90.
 Medici, Piero de', 72.
 Medici, Chapel of the, 12, 87.
 Metcalfe, Sir Theophilus, 210.
 Michael Angelo Buonarroti, 35, 41; birthplace of, 51; referred to by Landor, 56; in group of the Academe, 58, 60; "David" of, 72; Laurentian Library designed by, 85; Medicean statues of, 87; power of, 89; "The Three Fates" of, 171; Vasari's monument to, 182.
 Millais, Sir John, 175.
 Milton, 14, 26, 31, 32, 33, 34, 42, 45, 79, 206, 284; Landor's praise of, 286.
 "Milton in Italy," 287.
 Mirandola, Giovanni Picodella, 58, 160, 256; biography of, 92; visit of to Lorenzo *il Magnifico*, 93.
 Montepulciana, Fra Francesco de, 181.
 Mount-Edgcombe, Earl of, 217.
 Mount Morello, 73.
 Murillo, Madonna of, 170.
- NAPOLEON, 35, 36.
 Nelli, Bartolommeo, 51.
 Neptune, fountain of, 91.
 Nicino, Marsilio, 58.
 Northumberland, Duke of, 10, 12.
 Norton, Prof. Charles Eliot, 307.
- "One to Southey," 311.
 "Odyssey, The," 275, 306.
 Orcagna, 90.
 Ossini, Clarice, 178.
 Ossoli, Margaret, *née* Fuller, Countess d'Ossoli, 24; quoted from, 35; sojourn in Florence

INDEX

- of, 126, 127; Mrs. Browning's comment on, 127, 128; strange incident of, 128; curious prophecy regarding, 128; marriage of, 157; literary comparison of, 230.
- Ovid, 52.
- Pæstum*, ruined temples at, 47.
- Palazzo, Berti, 25; — Barberini, 149, 150; — Buondelmorte, 10; — Medici, 166; — Odeschalchi, 28; — Passerina, 24; — Pitti, 11, 166; — Podesta, 193; — Strozzi, 10, 99; — Vecchio, 11, 63, 90.
- "Pallas and the Centaur," by Botticelli, 169.
- Palmieri, Matteo, 67.
- Paolo and Francesca, 74.
- "Paracelsus," 189.
- Paris, 5, 35.
- Parker, Theodore, 24, 137, 316.
- Parsons, Dr. Thomas W., 193.
- "Pascarel," 64.
- Paynter, Mrs., *née* Aylmer, 206.
- "Pauline," 284.
- Peabody, Elizabeth, 125.
- Peabody, George, statue of, 155.
- "Pentameron, The," 113; Mrs. Browning's praises of, 250.
- "Pericles and Aspasia," 31, 230, 231, 285; Mrs. Browning's verdict on, 254.
- "Perseus," the, of Cellini, 90.
- Perugino, 55, 176.
- Peruzzi, Mme. Edith, *née* Story, 77.
- Petrarca, 114, 225, 226, 227, 229; collective works of, 291.
- Piazza del Duomo, 180; — *Indipendenza*, 84; — Santa Maria Novella, 126, 195; — della Signoria, 91; — Trinita, 9; — del Tritone, 149.
- Pitti, Luca, 166, 167.
- "Plato and Diogenes," 32.
- Platonic Academy of Florence, the, 26, 158.
- Poliziano, 58, 60, 160.
- Polybius, 26.
- Ponte Vecchio, 107.
- Powers, Hiram, 24, 105.
- Prinsep, Val, 305.
- "Proserpine," bust of, by Hiram Powers, 105.
- "Puck," by Harriet Hosmer, 137.
- Pulsky, Count, 125.
- "QUARTERLY REVIEW, The," 32.
- RACHEL, 38.
- Raphael, 35, 55, 62, 170, 173, 175.
- Renan, Ernest, 92.
- Reynolds, Sir Joshua, 235.
- Ricci, his monument to Dante, 182.
- "Roba di Roma," 155, 157.
- "Rosamunda," the first Italian tragedy, 62.
- "Romola," 84, 85, 95, 96, 98, 99.
- Rome, 68.
- Röntgen ray, the, 5.
- Rossellina, 176.
- Rossetti, Dante Gabriel, 305.
- Rousseau (in "Imaginary Conversations"), 223, 224, 225.
- Rubens, 111; portrait of, 173.
- Rucellai, Bernardo, 61.
- Rucellai, Giovanni, 62.
- Rucellai, the, 11, 17, 62.
- Ruskin, John, 68.
- Russell, Sir Henry and Lady, 209, 210.

INDEX

- SAINT ANDREW, 62, 63 ; —
 Romolo, 60 ; — Benedict, 75 ;
 — Francis, meeting of, with
 Saint Benedict, 75 ; — John,
 145 ; — Louis, statue of, 182 ;
 — Ornatus, 62 ; — Ber-
 nardino, 182.
 "Salle des Illusions," 6, 7.
 Sallust, 26.
 Salotto di Clement VII., 23.
 Salvator Rosa, 170.
 Salvini, Tommaso, visit of, to
 Story, 78.
 San Baldassare, convent of, 50.
 San Dominico, the hamlet of, 25.
 San Marco, 23, 95, 160, 161, 162,
 164.
 San Miniato, 42, 63.
 San Salvi, convent of, 62.
 Santa Trinità al Monte, gardens
 of, 14.
 Sarto, Andrea del, 170, 171.
 "Saul," Story's statue of, 155.
 Savonarola, Fra Girolamo, 19, 23,
 91, 94, 95, 98, 158, 159, 165 ;
 summons of, to Lorenzo's death-
 bed, 93, 176 ; words of, 161,
 162, 163, 164 ; statue of,
 180.
 "Savonarola e il Priori di San
 Marco," 158.
 "Search after Proserpine, The,"
 by Aubrey De Vere, 269.
 Settignano, 49, 62.
 Shakespeare, 192, 221, 222, 272,
 284.
 Shelley, Percy Bysshe, 32, 34,
 78, 196, 249, 284, 285.
 "Sibyl, The," by Story, 155.
 Sidney, Sir Philip, in "Imagi-
 nary Conversations," 241.
 Siena, 296, 300, 302.
 Simonides, 250.
 Sistine Chapel, the, 60.
 Sixtus IV., Pope, 178.
 "Sleeping Faun, The," by Har-
 riet Hosmer, 137.
 Smith, Professor and Mrs. Gold-
 win, 290.
 Sodoma, the frescoes of, 300.
 Soderini, Niccolo, 167.
 Somerville, Mrs., 24.
 Sophocles, 260.
 "Soul's Tragedy, A," 191.
 Southey, 28, 29, 30, 32, 56, 57,
 269.
 Southey, the, 36.
 Southey and Porson, in "Imagi-
 nary Conversations," 228, 229.
 Spini, The, 10.
 Story, Emeline, *née* Eldridge
 (Mrs. William Wetmore), 148.
 Story, Emma, *née* Eames (Mrs.
 Julian), 158.
 Story, Joseph, 148, 154 ; statue
 of, 155.
 Story, Julian, 158.
 Story, Waldo, 158.
 Story, William Wetmore, 76, 77,
 78, 146 ; characterization of
 Hawthorne, 106 ; personal ap-
 pearance described by Haw-
 thorne, 152 ; home of, 148, 149 ;
 friends of, 153 ; art of, 153,
 154 ; literary work of, 155, 156 ;
 friendship of, with Browning,
 157, 158 ; letter of, to Lowell,
 195.
 Storys, the, 24, 150, 151, 157,
 158, 192, 193, 195, 196, 197,
 259.
 Stowe, Harriet, *née* Beecher, 24,
 128 ; last words of, to Mrs.
 Browning, 129.
 Strozzi, Filippo, Trollope's Life of,
 138.

INDEX

Strozzi, Giovanni Battista, 88.
 Sumner, Charles, 57.

Swinburne, Algernon Charles, 24; quotation from, 171; Landor praised by, 250, 251; his visit to Landor, 306; his verses to the memory of Landor, 307.

Symonds, John Addington, 58, 59, 300.

TADEMA, Alma, 175.

Tasso, 240.

Taylor, O. J., 206.

Tennyson, Alfred, 124.

Tennyson, Frederic, 24, 123, 137.

Thackeray, William Makepeace, 24, 124, 158.

Theosophy, Florentine, Society of, 16.

Thuillier, Julia, 36 (*see* Landor).

Titian, 170.

Toledo, Duchessa Eleonora di, 11, 12, 167.

Tornabuoni, Mona Lucrezia, 86, 177.

Torra del Gullo, 14, 64, 66.

Trollope, Anthony, 138.

Trollope, Theodosia, *née* Garrow (Mrs. Thomas Adolphus), 216.

Trollope, Thomas Adolphus, villa of, 84, 99, 107, 139; quotation from, 117, 118, 119; words of, 138.

Trollopes, the, 136.

Tully, 26.

"Tuscan Sculptors," 184.

UFFIZI, gallery of, 11, 175, 180.

"Uncle Tom's Cabin," 192.

Urban VIII., 149, 150.

VALLOMBROSA, 19, 45, 50, 69, 71, 76, 79, 80.

Varchi, Benedetto, 182.

Vasari, 182.

Vatican, the, 173.

Vedder, Elihu, 153; genius of, 154; spiritual mysteries interpreted by, 154.

Verrocchio, 176.

Very, Jones, 193.

Villa Alberti, 281; Brichieri, 130, 136; Castello di Vincigliata, 61, 62; Gherardesca, 25; Landor, 26, 41, 52, 75, 202, 289, 294; Lago di Vallombrosa, 77, 78, Ludovisi, 149; Medici, 95; Mont-Auto, 130; Palmieri, 67; Trollope, 84.

Via Tornabuoni, 10; della Misericordia, 126; della Vigna Nuova, 10.

Victor Emmanuel, 22.

Victoria, Queen, visit of, to Florence, 68.

Villari, Linda, *née* White (Mme. Pasquale), 24, 136, 138.

Villari, Prof. Pasquale, 160, 161.

Villari, Senatore, 123.

"Vision of Ezekiel," 169.

Vittoria Colonna, in "Imaginary Conversations," 233, 234.

Voltaire, 55, 224, 225.

"WARRIOR, The," by Salvator Rosa, 170.

Washington, 55, 240.

Watts, George Frederic, 175.

Webster, Daniel, 283.

Willis, Nathaniel Parker, 24; visit of, to Landor, 48; brilliant life of, 48.

INDEX

- | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|
| Wilson, Mrs. Browning's maid,
303. | Wordsworth, William, 29, 34, 55,
190, 249. |
| Wheeler, Stephen, 209. | Wright, J. A., 88, 89. |
| White, Linda (<i>see</i> Villari). | ZENOBLA, by Harriet Hosmer, 137. |
| Whitman, Walt, 38. | |

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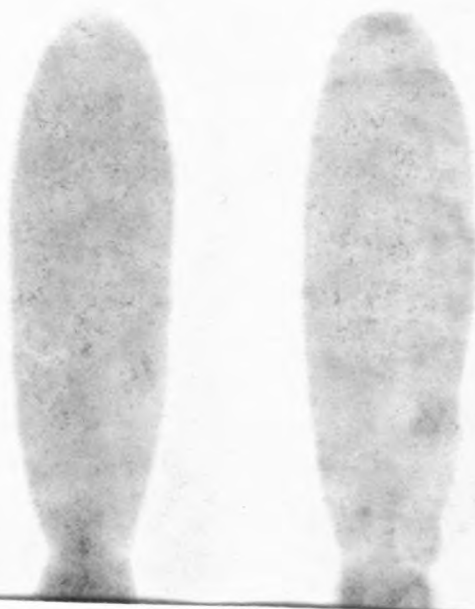


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